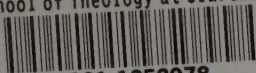


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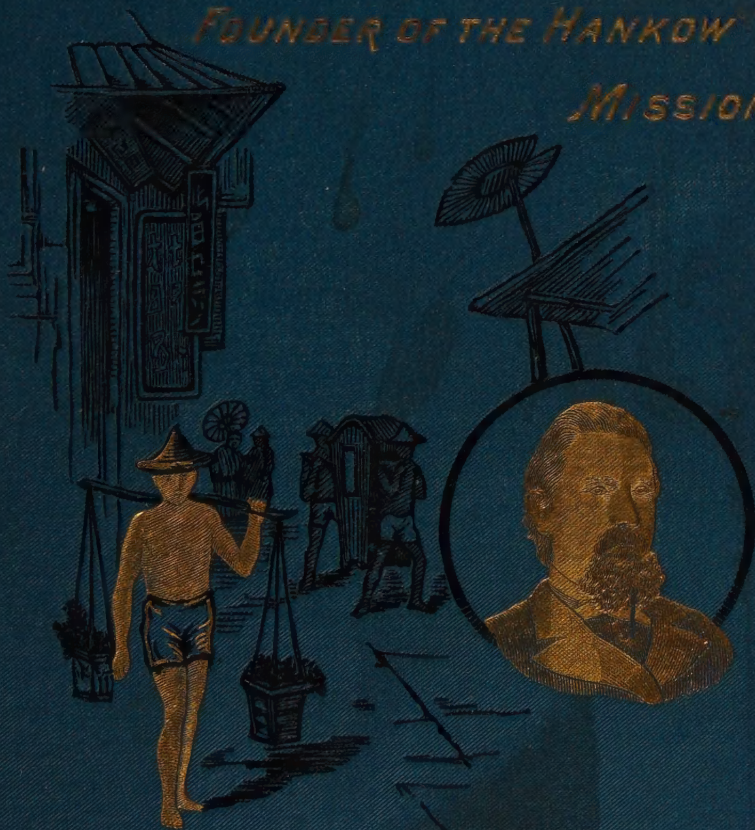


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# GRIFFITH JOHN

*FOUNDER OF THE HANKOW*

*MISSION.*



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# GRIFFITH JOHN

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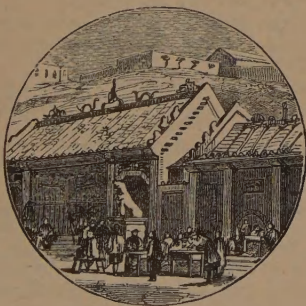
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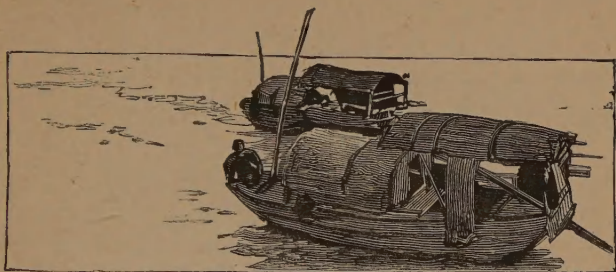
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## PREFACE.



THE introduction of Protestant Missions into the interior of China is of such recent date that the most eminent pioneers of that movement are still living.

Not only was Griffith John the first to preach in Hankow, and to carry the Gospel into the provinces of Si-chuen, Shan-si, and the capitals of other provinces which were long closed to missionaries by the obstinate pride of the officials and literati, but his eloquence as a preacher, his literary attainments, and the tact and adroitness displayed in dealing with officials of the government, combine to place him foremost on the list of Chinese missionaries.

He has, however, a position assigned to him by Higher authority than that of man. Upon him has been conferred the favour of the Most High, and such spiritual success has attended his ministry to the heathen, that human estimates of his place in the mission field are futile and inadequate. It remains for a higher audience to hear the answer which will be given to the question, "What shall be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honour?"

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A760

This volume is prepared chiefly from the correspondence, dating from the year 1850, of Mr. John with his well-beloved friend, the Rev. Elijah Jacob, of Ebley, Gloucestershire. The author gives his best thanks to Mr. Jacob and his family, for the efficient help and the great kindness they have shown to him. Information has also been obtained from the Annual Reports, and the "Chronicle" of the London Missionary Society.

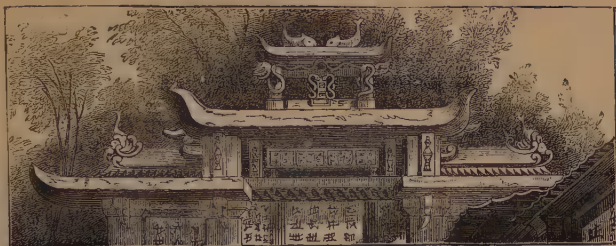
He also tenders cordial thanks to Mr. John Archibald, of the National Bible Society of Scotland. The chapter on Mr. John's literary work is chiefly the product of his pen.

The writer gratefully acknowledges the help rendered by the Rev. Professor Griffith, F.G.S., the Rev. Josiah Jones of Machynlleth, the Rev. David John of Manchester, W. Lockhart, Esq., F.R.C.S., formerly Medical Missionary in China, and Rev. G. Owen of Peking.

He is also especially indebted to Mrs. de Selincourt, of Balham, and to Mrs. de St. Croix, of Streatham, for the loan of photographs and copies of Mr. John's literary productions; and to Miss Wylie of Hampstead, for information respecting her father's journey with Mr. John through the provinces of Si-chuen and Shan-si.

Mr. John has only allowed this book to be published upon it being urgently represented to him that the perusal of it may be helpful to mission work in the great empire of China. Matters relating to his person and family have only been introduced so far as they are calculated to help the story of the Mission.





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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BOY PREACHER OF WALES—LOSING AND GAIN- ING A FATHER BY THE SAME GRAVE—COVENANT- ING TO BE A MISSIONARY.



“Far away, far away, in heathen darkness dwelling,  
Millions of souls for ever may be lost.  
Who, who, will go, salvation's story telling;  
Looking to Jesus—counting not the cost?”



FOR many years the Church of Christ had prayed that its missionaries might be admitted into China. Ancient heathenism, in proud possession of a literature the mastery of which demanded the effort of the most talented intellects, was quite satisfied and contented in the belief that it had little to learn from foreigners. But the mighty empire which for ages had imperiously forbidden the barbarian to tread upon her shores, suddenly found her gates of brass thrown open by the hand of Omnipotence.

That same power had also urged the Church to prepare men, and, when the golden opportunity arrived, promptly sent forth these messengers of

salvation into China's crowded cities. Further events pushed the door more widely open, and the vast interior was made accessible to missionary operations.

This book purposes to give some account of one of these pioneer missionaries. A man able and bold, yet full of tact withal. We prefer, however, to allow our readers to form their own conclusions respecting his character from the events here narrated, and would only add in explanation that they must be taken as illustrations, and not in any sense as a full and adequate account of his active and successful career.

Griffith John was born at Swansea on the 14th of December, 1831. His parents were religious, and comfortably situated in life, rather above the class to which they belonged. The father of Mr. John was much respected, and until his death continued in the employ of Messrs. Vivian and Sons.

His mother died of cholera in 1832, and his father's sister, who is still living, performed to Griffith a mother's part.

He was from childhood under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and loved to be with older Christians. At eight years of age he was admitted a member of the Church at Ebenezer, Swansea, and when between nine and ten years old took part in religious services. The first public prayer of this child, uttered with quivering lips and falling tears, consisted of only one petition: "O Lord, pardon my sins, through Jesus Christ. Amen."

When twelve years of age he entered the employ of Mr. John Williams of Onllwyn, who was a godly man, and soon perceived the promising character of the lad. He invited him to become an inmate of his house, and treated him as one of his own family.

At fourteen he commenced to preach the Gospel, and from the first gave evidence of possessing oratorical gifts of the highest order. The people delighted to hear him, and invitations reached him from various

churches. Among the crowded audiences many were heard to say, "What manner of child is this?" and the strongest hopes were entertained that a brilliant future awaited him in the ministry of the Gospel.

Much surprise was therefore occasioned when he suddenly withdrew from all public efforts, justifying his conduct by modest references to his youth and consequent inexperience. For a time he exercised his gifts in more private forms of Christian work. At length, yielding to the solicitations of the more prudent of his friends and his minister, he began in his sixteenth year to preach in different parts of the Principality, with good result. Everywhere he went it soon became manifest that in Griffith John God was preparing a mighty witness for Himself, and predictions were not wanting of a fame and career of usefulness awaiting him, as great as that of the venerated Christmas Evans, the Apostle of Wales.

It was pointed out that a course of study would be of great benefit, and his father asked the Rev. E. Jacob, the pastor of Ebenezer Chapel, Swansea, if "he would teach Griffith a little." The kind-hearted pastor had gratuitously rendered similar help to other young men who were preparing for the ministry, and from the 13th of November, 1848, until September, 1850, Mr. John resided with him, and received daily instruction at his hands.

In 1849 his father was smitten by the disease to which his mother had succumbed, seventeen years before, and died of cholera. The bitter grief which the son manifested at the grave so kindled the compassion of Mr. Jacob, that he said Griffith should never know the lack of an earthly father as long as he lived. That vow he faithfully kept, and the relationship thus created has been maintained with touching ardour on both sides to this day.

Mr. Jacob was most assiduous in preparing his young charge for the career of great usefulness which



he felt lay before him. In answer to the questions of the College authorities at Brecon, when Mr. John was seeking admission, Mr. Jacob penned a series of replies beautiful alike for their simplicity and truthfulness. While the love and esteem which he bore towards his young friend might at that time be regarded as likely to increase his estimate, the truth of his statements, made in March, 1850, has been fully confirmed by the lofty and steadfast Christian character maintained by Mr. John, as well as by the unanimous testimony of strange audiences during nearly forty years of successful work.

All cannot be recorded here, but a few may be noted. After claiming the right to speak emphatically, by reason of the "long-continued and most advantageous opportunities" for observing and judging of his pupil, Mr. Jacob says:

"Considering his age, he is decidedly the nearest to being a perfect or complete Christian of any I ever knew. He is amiable. I have never seen the slightest indication of bad temper. He is as humble as a babe . . . . at all times willing to do whatever he is asked by those to whom he looks for direction.

"His preaching talents are in my opinion of an extraordinary character. His voice is sweet, his delivery easy and fluent. Judging from the present, he will in five or six years be the most popular minister in Wales. I have heard him talk like an orator for a whole hour, and then in a few moments arouse the whole congregation to a state of astonishing excitement; not by unmeaning declamation, but by sound sense and real eloquence.

"He does not apply to the College because he cannot get a sphere of usefulness. Young as he is, several of the leading men in some of our churches, where he occasionally preaches, have told me, 'We do not care to hear any one else if we can have Griffith John;' but he is far from being of the same

views, for he is aware that a minister should have his mind well-stored with useful information.

"I have watched him as carefully as I have been able, and the fact is, I have not found a single drawback."

Mr. John entered college in September, 1850, and on the evening of the first Sabbath Mr. Jacob penned a characteristic letter full of loving counsel; particularly laying stress upon piety, adherence to his pledge of total abstinence, "to avoid acquaintance in the way of courtship," rigid adherence to promises, forethought, courtesy towards those who showed him hospitality, punctuality upon all occasions; concluding with the injunction, "Remember! whatever you are at college, so to a very great extent you will be through life."

The last sentence is elucidated for us by the Rev. Josiah Jones, who occupied the same study with Mr. John, and says that at the time of his entrance into college, Mr. John "was a short and slender youth, with a frank face and full well-formed forehead, the hair curving out as a canopy." Of his moral character while at Brecon, which was most exemplary, Mr. Jones states, "I don't remember any expression falling from him that betokened a low taste, and much less an inward moral impurity." Also: "Among Mr. John's chief characteristics as a student, showing that during all his life there has been a uniform continuity in his character, the following may be mentioned: diligence, perseverance, and efficiency."

Mr. John had the advantages of the stimulating tuition of the Rev. Professor Henry Griffith, F.G.S., who was at the time Principal of the College. Alike in mathematics, philosophy, and theology, Professor Griffiths showed himself an able and energetic leader in study, never evading a difficulty, or contented until his students had grappled with and mastered it.

Mr. John had entered college indulging in the hope

of becoming one day a successful and popular minister ; but he was not allowed to entertain this long without challenge, for God met him, and cast out the earthly ambition, putting in its place an ardent longing for missionary work among the heathen.

In March, 1853, Mr. John offered his services to the London Missionary Society, and when replying to the question, "How long had he entertained the *desire* to be a missionary?" said that it had entered his heart soon after the commencement of his college course ; and that, though there had been fluctuations in its strength, he could fairly say that it was a progressive one. In confirmation of this it should be stated that not long after he entered college, a fellow student and himself entered into a solemn covenant to become missionaries. This meant a great deal to the popular young preacher, who henceforth had to put away all the seductive offers of eager churches. One from the important Congregational Church of Aberaman severely tested his resolution. But God puts one thing against another for the proving of His children ; and while this invitation was awaiting an answer, the veteran missionary, the Rev. David Griffiths, of Madagascar, visited the College, and addressed the students with great earnestness, concluding by an appeal for labourers. Mr. John then openly declared his wish and determination to be a missionary.

Having been accepted by the London Missionary Society, Mr. John was removed to Bedford in January, 1854, to give him better opportunities of preaching in the English tongue. At the time of his going there, one of the tutors said, "I find that Mr. John is so well read up, that I do not think I can do much for him."

Hitherto the bent of his mind had been towards Madagascar as a sphere of labour. He writes: "Oh, how glad I would be if the doors were opened. My heart is there now!" At that time Madagascar was closed to European missionaries by the cruel Queen



Ranavalona. But he did not offer any objection when asked to go to China, and soon was aglow with enthusiasm for the dark-minded millions of the Flowery Land.

Before leaving England, Mr. John married Miss Margaret Jane Griffiths, daughter of the Rev. David Griffiths, of Madagascar, who was then settled in a pastorate at Hay, Breconshire. A more happy selection could not have been made, and Mrs. John proved herself a successful worker among the women of China.

His ordination took place at Swansea on Good Friday, the 6th of April, 1855, when Ebenezer Chapel was packed with an enthusiastic audience, which did not conceal the strong emotion felt at parting with their eloquent young preacher. Special services were also held in the afternoon and evening of the same day. On the following Thursday Mr. John preached a farewell sermon in the same place, after which a testimonial was presented to the young missionary as an expression of the esteem and good wishes of his friends.

The Rev. Griffith John and Mrs. John, and the Rev. A. Williamson and Mrs. Williamson, being appointed to reinforce the Chinese Mission, sailed for Shanghai on the 21st of May, 1855; eager for service in the "Land of Sinim," as they listened to the distinct, though distant cry, "Come over and help us!"





## CHAPTER II.

### SHANGHAI—BUCKLING ON HIS ARMOUR.

\*—

“Thy long night is ending  
Of sorrow and wrong,  
For shame there is glory,  
For weeping a song.  
The new morn is dawning,  
Bursts forth the new sun ;  
The new verdure is smiling,  
The new age is begun.”

DR. BONAR.

\*—

ON September the 24th, 1855, the good ship, *Hamilla Mitchell*, bearing the missionaries, reached Shanghai after a pleasant and uneventful voyage of one hundred and twenty days. Mr. John could not have arrived at a more opportune time. For forty years missionaries had longed for and prayed that an opportunity might be afforded for the free proclamation of the Gospel to the country people of China. Their prayers were about to be answered. For five years the Taiping rebellion, headed by Hung-sew-tsuen, had ravaged the fairest part of the country; while the growing influence of the Western Powers of Europe claimed the attention of the Imperial Government. For ages this Government had exercised a strong conserving power, now its grasp slackened,

and the growing laxity of its sway was utilised by the missionaries in the seaports to make evangelistic tours inland. Under the treaty of Nanking, made between Great Britain and China in 1842, foreigners were only allowed to go a day's journey from the Treaty ports. The door had been gradually opening, and at the time of Mr. John's arrival the country was practically free to travellers with peaceful objects in view.

Mr. John entered upon his work with characteristic ardour. He had studied hard during the voyage, and now applied himself to the acquisition of the language, with the hope that in six months he would be able to preach. He writes in his first letter to England: "I am anxious, I long to be able to speak of Christ to the people. I can just ask them at present if they believe in Jesus, and tell them that it is the best thing they possibly can do. Pray for me that I may be made eminently useful in China." This request was responded to by many hearts, and we trust that the facts recorded in these pages will prove that those prayers have been answered.

While the house intended for them was being repaired, Mr. and Mrs. John stayed with the veteran missionary, Dr. Medhurst, whose forty years of pioneering toil were fast drawing to a close. Like Israel of old, he had long sought to enter the goodly land his heart was set upon, and during the previous year he had been able to make a few preaching journeys into the country about Shanghai. His reward was at hand, and a part of it would be the revelation that the man who stood by him in his latter days was designed by God to carry the Gospel to the central and western provinces of China. Shanghai was at that time the residence of twenty-five missionaries belonging to various British and American societies. These all accorded a hearty welcome to the new comers, who soon felt at home with their fellow-

labourers in the mission-field. In January, 1856, the heart of the young missionary was gladdened by the birth of a son, whom he named Griffith; but the child was usually spoken of under his Chinese name of Mei-foh. In June of the same year Mr. John modestly says, respecting his first direct efforts, "For some months I have been in the habit of going into the temples, the tea gardens, and other places to distribute tracts and preach in my humble way. I am able now to speak for half-an-hour or three-quarters with considerable ease and fluency. To my great satisfaction, I find that I am very well understood. This is a great thing in speaking the Chinese language, because so much depends on the tones and mere rising or falling, shortening or lengthening of the sound makes all the difference imaginable in a word which is in every other aspect the same, that is, if written in the Roman character. This makes the acquisition of the spoken language both a tedious and difficult task. The written language is a colossus of an affair. It is decidedly difficult of acquisition, as will appear from the fact that no European has hitherto mastered it. I like the study of it very much. It is no tiresome work to me. Its difficulty only intensifies my desire to grapple with it, and finally to lay it prostrate at my feet. The conquering of this language is worth a long and manly struggle. Who would feel it a burdensome task to learn a language which is intended by the providence of God to be a channel through which Divine truth, like a life-giving stream, is to flow into four hundred millions of thirsty but immortal souls. Such a thought is sufficient to call out all the energies of one's being. Where is there a nobler object or a higher end for the entire consecration of all the powers and faculties of the soul? The glory of God in the salvation of souls is the noblest work under heaven." This may be taken as the key-note of Mr. John's life and work in China.



TEA GARDENS, SHANGHAI.



After a few months he accompanied Mr. Edkins and other missionaries in various preaching journeys, being absent two or three weeks, and penetrating 150 miles inland. He says, "We have access to millions of the most callous, indifferent, worldly-minded, and irreligious people."

For several months in the latter part of 1856 the country surrounding Shanghai suffered much from drought, and at first both mandarins and people were most assiduous in praying to their idols to send fertilising showers. As these did not come, the people left off religious services, and said the idols were useless. The priests went round the streets for several days in solemn procession, but in vain. They were then spoken of with contempt by all the people, who seemed inclined to listen to the missionaries and to appreciate their efforts. Alas! when the rains did fall they soon sank into their former indifference.

Mr. John had hitherto accompanied older missionaries on preaching journeys, but on October 31st, 1856, he started upon an expedition, taking only Wong the colporteur as assistant.

The first place of importance which they visited was the large city of Swong Kong, 40 miles distant from Shanghai. They anchored for the night four miles below the city, and upon awaking the next morning, Mr. John found they were entering the west gate of the city. It was the time for the Annual Examinations, and candidates for literary honours crowded the streets, affording intelligent audiences wherever the missionary and his helper chose to preach. They had a good supply of books, which were eagerly sought after. No marks of displeasure or ill-will were manifested by any of the people.

In the afternoon, as they were walking about distributing books, Wong offered one to a respectable-looking man, who after reading the title-page, tore the book in pieces. Wong was much disconcerted,

and began to remonstrate with the man in a loud tone for not returning the book if he did not like it. Mr. John stood astonished, as notwithstanding the thousands of books and tracts he had distributed, he had never seen this done before. When the people around saw that the missionaries were annoyed at the unprecedented insolence, they begged them not to be angry, as the man was a *Roman Catholic*.

After a long day's toil, Mr. John and his assistant returned to the boat, and gathering the boatmen around him, Mr. John read with them, and explained the New Testament and prayed. He declares that this was the happiest hour of the day. The morrow was the Lord's Day. Alas! there is no Sabbath in China. There is nothing but noise, bustle, tumult, confusion and impiety, as at any other time. The preachers, however, had larger and more attentive congregations of the graduates.

The following day they returned to Shanghai, Mr. John having an attack of fever and ague; but thanks to the prompt and energetic treatment of Dr. Lockhart, he soon recovered.

Whilst thus energetic in the country, Mr. John and his helpful wife were not neglectful of those in and around their own home. They had engaged a female servant who knew nothing of God, of a Saviour, or of the future. Mrs. John instructed her daily, and Mr. John at family worship had opportunities of speaking to her. She became very anxious to know the truth and to feel its blessed influence. She soon desired baptism; and with her two children was admitted into the church, of which she afterwards proved herself to be a worthy member.

As early as September, 1857, Mr. John had projects for going far into the interior, beyond the reach of foreign influence, and labouring for the spiritual welfare of the people. But the time had not come, and he remained at Shanghai, studying and working so as to

make himself "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." He informed his friends that his two years' residence had corrected his estimate of the work, and the immense difficulties which lay in the way of the Gospel in China. He says: "The good work is moving but very slowly. The people are as hard as steel. They are eaten up both soul and body by the world, and do not seem to feel that there can be reality in anything beyond sense. To them our doctrine is foolishness, our talk jargon. We discuss and beat them in argument. We reason them into silence and shame; but the whole effort falls upon them like showers upon a sandy desert. Sometimes I am ready to think that China is doomed; but there is a promise which dissipates the gloom, viz., that those 'from the land of Sinim' are to come. The teachers China has listened to for thousands of years have taught only things respecting the present life. Confucius, while speaking admirably on propriety, justice, faithfulness, the proper governing of the family, the ruling of the kingdom, and the promotion of peace on earth, says, 'Respect the gods, but keep them at a distance.' The Chinaman's way of doing this is to think of them as little as possible."

In October, 1857, Mr. John and the Rev. J. Edkins visited Soochow, which is regarded by the Chinese as one of their richest and most beautiful cities. They say that to be happy on earth one must be born at Soochow, live in Canton, and die in Soochow, for in the first are the handsomest people, in the second the richest luxuries, and in the third the best coffins. It lies north-west of Shanghai; and within the city walls, which are twelve miles in circumference, there are about one million and a half of people.

No foreigner had previously visited this city undisguised. No sooner had the missionaries got within the gates than they were very politely invited by an official to walk into his house and be seated.



In about two minutes another official of higher rank appeared and cross-questioned the visitors, after which he said that he could not permit them to proceed into the city. They remonstrated with him, upon which he said, "Well, you cannot go through *this* gate, you had better try another." Seeing it was useless to press the matter, they returned to their boat, and gave the boatmen orders to enter one of the water gates. This was successfully done, and they visited the chief places of attraction. Then, having preached to a large number of people, they returned to the boat, much pleased with their success. Their presence excited much curiosity, but they were not molested; so on the following day they penetrated to the heart of the city, and distributed several hundred copies of the New Testament.

Mr. John now devoted himself almost exclusively to itinerating, and visited a large number of towns and cities. Early in 1858, accompanied by a brother missionary, he visited the two large cities of Kia-hing and Kia-shan, about one hundred miles from Shanghai. They resolved to alter the usual plan of preaching two or three long sermons in the course of the day, and adopted the method of making short and simple statements of Gospel truth, and earnest and affectionate appeals to the hearers' consciences. These occupied only a few minutes; and by commencing early in the morning, and preaching simultaneously till late in the evening for several days, there was hardly a street or the corner of a street in these two cities in which the glad tidings were not proclaimed to thousands for the first time. The multitudes listened attentively, no one interrupted or expressed any ill-will. Many seemed touched, but the majority treated the message with indifference or contempt. Mr. John at this time expressed his conviction that the old idea that China must be worked upon from above—first the wise, rich and noble, and then descending to the lower classes—

was utterly absurd. He stated that the experience of both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries, proved that China was no exception to the general rule, and said, "If we would convert China, we must begin with the common people, and devote our energies principally to their enlightenment."

On the 29th of March, 1858, Mr. John and his family left Shanghai for Ping-hu (the peaceful lake), which is about 200 Chinese miles distant. Here they rented a house outside the city, and during the summer he spent much time there, preaching daily to excellent congregations. A catechumen class was formed of six inquirers, and afterwards a church was established. His purpose was to establish similar stations in the various cities near Shanghai, and itinerate among them, superintending the native assistant missionaries and the work.

Soon his eyes and heart moved in the direction of Hang-chow, the Athens of China, and events allowed him to carry out his purpose in the succeeding month. Starting with his family on the 19th of April, they arrived at Sung Kiang the following evening, and the next morning visited the residence of the native assistant missionary, which was called "Zion House," where the members of the church had assembled. Several female inquirers, hearing that Mrs. John was accompanying her husband, had also come together. Social affairs in China then caused it to be thought very imprudent for females to meet a man who was a stranger, and especially a foreigner. Mrs. John's presence, however, dispelled all fear, and these good women gladly came forward to make a public confession of their faith in Jesus.

When Mrs. John entered the house, an immense crowd followed, and as many as possibly could crowded into the "ka-dong" (guest room) where she sat. The host and hostess found it impossible to restrain the curiosity of the people, and Mr. John had to go

out and exhort them to be quiet. Upon his return, the visitors sat down to a repast of fruit, cakes, and tea. The food was placed upon the table in plates, but there were none to eat from. The guests were helped to food by the lady of the house, who taking a portion with her fingers, placed it upon the table, which was not very clean. When all had finished, the table was cleared, and wiped down with a piece of paper.

Mr. John examined the female candidates, and those who satisfied him were admitted to the church by baptism. One was the widow of a mandarin who had been killed by the Taiping rebels. The other two women admitted were mother and daughter, the infant of the latter being also baptized. Her husband had been received into the church several months previously.

A service for the men was next conducted by Mr. John in the adjoining room, and five were admitted as members. Meanwhile, the women were employed in critically examining Mrs. John. Some remarked that Yang-sian-sang's wife was much handsomer. One thought Mrs. John must be clever; while another was struck with the smoothness of her hair, and praised it volubly. They agreed that she spoke the Shanghai dialect very well. This conversation was sustained until the men's meeting ended, and the missionaries left. They stayed over Sunday at Ping-hu, and arrived at Hang-chow on Wednesday. They visited the Si-hu (west lake) the following day, which happened to be the birthday of the goddess Quaning. On the way several boats and junks were seen full of passengers returning from the worship of this goddess. This is the most flourishing seat of the Buddhist religion, and some of these pilgrims had travelled more than 200 miles to attend these ceremonies. The lake is nearly round, and the city of Hang-chow skirts the eastern shore; while opposite are hills, with numbers of Buddhist monasteries placed

amidst what is said to be the most beautiful scenery in China. There is a most picturesque island in the lake, connected with the city by a bank, which is used as a promenade. This bank was the work of the poet Su-tung-p'o. When standing in the Tang-tsi (summer house) on the island, a remarkable echo can be obtained from the opposite hill. After several words have been uttered they are distinctly repeated.

Hiring one of the many pleasure boats, they visited the Tsing-tsel-zz'l temple, where there are 500 life-sized gilded figures representing disciples of Buddha (Sohangs), among them being several deceased Emperors of the present dynasty. The imperial disciples are distinguished by umbrellas hanging over their heads. Near the temple is the tomb of a famous warrior, Yo-lan-ye, who defeated the Kiu Tartars and drove them beyond the Yellow River. His enemies procured his recall, and assassinated him in prison. The leader of these conspirators was Tsing-keno, whose descendants will on no account enter the city of Hang-chow, where his remains are exhibited in a humiliating position. The missionaries were interested in the large monastery of Tian-tso, where 500 monks live. The magnificent stone way leading up to it between the hills was frequented by beggars of every description, blind, dumb, lame, many with open sores exposed to excite compassion, who cried to Buddha to help them, while they made persistent efforts to obtain alms from visitors.

In the Ling-zin monastery is a large temple, which has a square hall with the light so arranged that it falls with equal radiance upon each row of 50 life-sized gilded Sohangs. The priests here were rather proud of their cook-house, which contained three immense copper boilers, one capable of cooking sufficient rice for 1,600 persons.

Opposite to this temple was a cave in the rock which had been made into a temple. The rocky



sides of the cave were sculptured with various figures of Buddha. Here the priest pointed to a small round hole in the wall, and said that the *head* of Buddha was to be seen there. The missionaries, however, looked in vain. They must have lacked the faith needful for such a sight. Here, too, was a pond with several snakes in it. Mr. John asked the priest why they did not kill them. He was quite shocked at the idea, and said, "If I killed one of these I might in so doing kill perhaps my grandfather." Several missionaries had visited this Buddhist parade in the previous year, and conversed with some of the most learned priests upon the nature and claims of Christianity. The head of one of the monasteries besought them not to oppose the old religion, but to advocate Christianity as parallel with and not antagonistic to Buddhism. He invited them on these terms to come and erect a church close by the magnificent monastery.

This great city of Hang-chow contains over a million inhabitants, while the trade of several provinces meets here, and contributes much to its prosperity.

They returned to Sung Kiang, passing through many places on the way where they preached and gave away tracts and books. Three women awaited baptism at this place, also three children, and the missionaries were much encouraged at the condition of the little church. After a most successful tour, the party reached Shanghai again on May 14th, 1858.

It must not be supposed that Mr. John's time was devoted chiefly to seeing strange sights. He pursued at Hang-chow, as elsewhere, that steady course of preaching and the distribution of tracts and books, which paved the way for further missionary effort in this beautiful city.

While meditating further efforts in the neighbourhood of Ping-hu, Mr. John had a house offered him to preach and live in by a native of the city of Sung-Kiang-fu. As family circumstances made it advisable

to draw nearer to Shanghai, he accepted the kind offer, and left Ping-hu towards the end of July, 1858.

Sung Kiang-fu is a departmental city in the province of Kiang-Su, and about 40 miles from Shanghai. The people pride themselves upon their superiority in knowledge and polite manners. A missionary had attempted to settle there several months previously, but had to leave through the interference of the Mandarin. About ten days after Mr. John had begun his energetic efforts, the town constable tried to frighten him away. Perceiving that unless bold action were taken the whole body of petty officials would carry on a series of vexatious annoyances, he resolved to address the Mandarin direct, informing him of his presence in the city, the object of his visit, and some of the provisions of the New Tientsin Treaty between China and England. He got his pundit to write a very polite letter, and sent it by his servant. No official notice was taken of this, but peace reigned for a time. After a while the petty officers recommenced their stealthy approaches, but the missionary was equal to the occasion. He told them that he had already written to the Mandarin, and that the affair now stood between himself and that high officer. This proved omnipotent, and scattered the selfish herd. Splendid congregations daily listened to the message of salvation, and in three weeks there were five candidates for church membership.

The birth of another son, in September (whom he named David), compelled him to return to Shanghai. The church was, however, well-cared-for by the evangelist in charge.

Early in October, 1858, Mr. John and three of his brother missionaries resolved to make an extended tour, preaching and distributing books in all the cities along the Grand Canal, as far as its entrance into the Yellow River. They also were anxious to ascertain what influence the capture of the Taku Forts



PASSING A LOCK ON THE GRAND CANAL.

and the Treaty of Tientsin had had upon the people, and how far mission work could be carried on.

The Grand Canal is 650 miles in length, and is divided into three parts, which were made under three different dynasties. By it and the rivers it connects, there is an almost uninterrupted water-way made from north to south of the Empire, *i.e.*, from Peking to Canton. Between the Yellow River and the River Yang-tsi, the Canal is carried along an artificial mound of earth, and is flanked by walls of stone, upon the stability of which many cities depend for safety. Upon this Canal are dozens of custom-houses, and the chief duty of the officials seems to be to apprehend all suspicious characters. The most formidable of these custom-houses was that at Hübz-Gwan, ten miles beyond Soochow, which was usually avoided; the few travellers who had been so audacious as to attempt to pass it having been summarily turned back. On this occasion, however, the boat which lay across the Canal swung round to let them pass, as soon as the presence of four Western barbarians was made known. At the other end of the town, however, they were vigorously challenged by an official crying out:

"Stop, what boat is that? Who have you inside?" He was told that they were foreigners from Shanghai. "Are they merchants? Have they any merchandise?"

"No" said Mr. John, "we are preachers; our only object is to preach and distribute books." The hearing his own language spoken seemed to conciliate the official, and to excite confidence; and after writing down their names, and the giving of a few books on their part, they were allowed to proceed.

The party next came to Chang-chew fú, a large city mentioned by Marco Polo as "a great and noble city," the residence of the Governor-General. Here they found a strong chain across the Canal, and the custom-house people were thrown into great con-



sternation by the sudden appearance of the Shanghai boat. They were still more perplexed when informed that the foreigners intended to cross the Yang-tsi. Evidently wishing to consult their superiors the party were detained for the night. The next morning they were allowed to proceed to the next city, Yan-yang, where two military mandarins appeared on their arrival, and inquired into their objects. Upon examining the books minutely the mandarins said, "We perceive your object is to exhort the people to turn from the bad and follow the good." A long conversation ensued, and all the force of Chinese logic and eloquence was employed to induce them to return. The country was said to be in commotion, robbers were abroad, the rebels were active. But the missionaries distinctly said they would not go back. The following morning the literary Mandarin came with a large retinue to pay his compliments. He was very affable, and promised to send a boat to guard them as far as the next station.

After he left an English service was held, and also large native congregations were preached to. A present of cakes and dishes, prepared in the highest Chinese style, was received from the Mandarin, and the following morning a return present of medical and other books was sent by the missionaries. He then sent another present of tea, cakes, and dates. The party now passed on, and were treated with courtesy all the way.

The common people were at a loss how to address the missionaries. Mr. John heard a woman say,

"Behold! there is a little devil."

"Yes," said the woman addressed, "he is a *real* devil," meaning a *foreigner* and not a rebel—the latter allowing the hair to grow upon their heads like Europeans, instead of shaving it off in Chinese fashion.

In returning they took another route, and visited

many cities not previously entered by missionaries. They also spent four days at Hang-chow—the earthly paradise). Here they preached freely, although but a short time before a missionary venturing there had been summoned before the Mandarin, and sent back to Shanghai under an escort.

In June, 1859, Mr. John and the Rev. W. Muirhead travelled to the Yellow River, purposing to go a few days journey beyond Hwai-ngan-fu if practicable. It may be well to note a few exceptional incidents of this journey.

Upon arriving at the city of Kiang-yin, early on the morning of the 8th of June, they found the departmental examinations in progress, and 3000 students assembled. After Mr. John had spoken for some time to a number of the *literati*, one of them coloured up and assumed a threatening attitude. No notice was taken, and when done speaking Mr. John walked quietly away. Hearing a noise behind, he turned and found several of the *literati* trying to excite the people. He tried to pacify them, but they grew more furious, and the ringleader, shutting his fist, threatened to strike the missionary. Knowing from experience that it was as dangerous to show fear as temerity, he walked along leisurely. They then cried out that he was not a foreigner, but a long-haired rebel in disguise. He told them with emphasis that he was an Englishman, and observed with pardonable pride that this made some of them turn pale. “Ergo Romanus sum” never had greater moral force than “I am an Englishman!” did at that moment in China. Mr. John prudently informed the Mandarin of the facts of the case, who told him that strict orders had been given to all the constables that foreigners were to be properly treated. The missionaries preached in the afternoon to large and attentive audiences.

The following day they crossed the River Yang-tsi, which was five miles wide. As soon as they reached



TYPES OF CHINESE FACES.

firm ground the missionaries landed, and walked to the city of Tsing-kiang. They were now in new fields of missionary effort, and Mr. John says: "I know not whether anyone experiences emotion worthy to be compared with the thrill of joy which the missionary feels, when permitted for the first time to point out to a sin-enslaved people the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." At many of the towns the whole population turned out to gaze on the features and strange-looking clothes of the visitors. Mr. John feared the excitement would prevent the people from understanding the teaching, but hoped the next preacher would find a way prepared for him. At Kiang-yein the missionaries had thousands of hearers, and observed among the crowd many rich and apparently well-educated men.

Here Mr. John had a long conversation with a Chinese colporteur, a native of Tan-tu. He was a quiet, respectable layman, who, pitying the ignorance and wickedness of men, devoted his time to distributing Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian books. Many rich and learned men supported him, and Mr. John believed that the advocates of the three religions had in this way united to actively propagate their faiths in opposition to Christianity.

Upon arriving at Tsing-Kiang-fu thousands of the most boisterous class of the people collected. The missionaries sent their cards to the Mandarin, and were soon visited by one of military blue-button rank, who was very talkative, and invited them to take tea at his "vile cottage." They suggested that it would not be safe to leave their boats, but he said, "Don't mind that," and then ordered Sedan chairs to be brought for all. When the Mandarin rose to go, he said, "You better not come." They supposed that he expected them to decline his invitation, and was disgusted that they had taken him at his word.

The visit of the Mandarin was followed by a host of

officials of white-button rank sent from the different yamens—all asking the same questions, their object being to compare notes. Several were ordered to remain on board, as they said to protect the boat, but really to watch the movements of the missionaries. Two soldiers were also stationed ashore to keep the crowd in order.

As the missionaries wished to visit the ancient bed of the Yellow River, they applied for chairs, which one of their guardians promised to get them, but he must first mention it to his superiors. Soon chairs appeared, and when about to start one of the official friends asked the missionaries to wait a little until another message was sent to the Ho-tai. All at once the chairs disappeared, never to return. The missionaries' patience having been tried for six hours, they determined to take a decisive step. Making a final application they were told that it was getting late, and they had better wait until the morning. Indignant at this duplicity the missionaries said they would not wait but walk, and springing ashore made their way with ease through the crowd. This manœuvre, being altogether unexpected, took the officials by surprise. They were followed by two white-buttons and a couple of strong fellows, who did good service in keeping back the crowd.

Mr. John writes, "We soon reached the deserted bed of the Yellow River, and found it as the Chinese say, 'as dry as dust!' We not only crossed it dry-shod, but converted it into a temporary pulpit. Where but a few years ago the Hwang rolled majestically, dreaded by the inhabitants of the plain, now cottages are built, gardens planted, sheep are browsing, and carriages are passing to and fro. Here and there are pools of water, but no stream. At this place the bed is nearly as high as the banks, and the surface deposit is of the finest sand.

"It must be left to the geologist to account precisely



for this mighty change. To an amateur it looks as if the old Hwang had choked up its channel with the sand and mud it used to carry down, and that though it now finds its way by Tsan-chew into the Gulf of Pechele, it will ere long close the new channel in a similar way, and be forced back to the old one, or compelled to seek for a third."

This prediction has not yet been fulfilled; but in the autumn of 1887 old Hwang did break through his banks much higher up, and gave an earnest of what he may yet do in that way, by inundating a large tract of country and destroying much life and property.

When the missionaries returned to their boat they learned from the teacher that the straightforwardness, fearlessness, and original powers of foreigners had been the topics of conversation among the officials during their absence. They were anxious to proceed further, but had no passports, and the officials and mandarins kept up a complete system of espionage, and forbade anyone to speak or give information, so they determined to return, which they did without molestation. It was observed that here the means of communication were horses, mules, asses, wheelbarrows, and carriages drawn by mules. They saw only one camel.





### CHAPTER III.

## THE TAIPING REBELLION.

—\*—  
“Hear ye the truth, and hearing it, obey ;  
Know ye the truth, the truth shall make you free ;  
Love not the midnight, love the lightsome day,  
’Tis life and liberty.  
The Free One makes you free ; He breaks the rod ;  
He bids you lift your heads to sky and sun,  
As freemen of the everlasting God,  
Kneeling to Him alone.”

DR. BONAR.

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**I**T is an important fact and worth noting that in the remarkable longevity of the Chinese State its life has not only been broken but also preserved by innumerable rebellions and changes of dynasty. Revolution is to the Chinaman something more than it is even to the modern Parisian, being his only constitutional means of getting rid of bad governments, and is associated in his mind with patriotic deeds of heroism, of noble self-sacrifices, and with some of the brightest periods of the national history.

It has usually happened that the numerous dynasties have been established by men of noble virtue and great force of character. Succeeding gene-

rations have deteriorated until some Emperor has been reached who combined debauchery with cruelty, and only worked for evil in his ruling of the State. Then came ruin, and with it some patriot rose to say like Tang, who destroyed the famous Hea dynasty, "I dread the Supreme Ruler, so I dare not refuse to destroy the wicked sovereign."

The Manchu dynasty of Ta-tsing, although labouring under the disadvantage of being Tartars, had reigned for 200 years with moderation, when between the years 1830 and 1840 an unusual number of rebellions, inundations, and famines caused great discontent among the people. To this must be added the growing power of foreigners, and troubles arising therefrom.

Thus the country was very unsettled when Hung-sew-tsuen, the Taiping chief, arose. He was a poor lad, of the despised Hakka race, who were always, in feeling at least, "in opposition" to the Government. He was possessed of an able mind, and essentially Chinese in his ways of thinking. From some cause unknown he failed in his several attempts to take his degree at Canton. Being of a very ambitious turn of mind, he had to resort to *unofficial* ways of obtaining notoriety, so in 1837 he had trances, proclaimed himself a heavenly prince, and fixed upon his door-post a proclamation of "The noble principles of the Heavenly King, the Sovereign King Tsuen." It should be noted that this proclamation was made before he became acquainted with Christianity, and afterwards he never abated one jot of his claim to supreme rule on earth. In 1843 he began to study Christian tracts, and in 1847 put himself under the instruction of Mr. J. Roberts, an American missionary in Canton. His actions lead us to conclude that he was not really an impartial searcher after truth, but rather a seeker of newer and more potent principles than those taught by the classic books of China,

which should give increased force and shape to his claim to a divine mission. His writings do not show that he appreciated the real spirit of Christianity, but the skill with which he turned some of its doctrines to his own use was really wonderful. These results were beyond the power of a merely cunning impostor, and go far to prove that he was sincere, and that his great talent was aided by a profound belief in himself.

This was the man who was to sweep over this great land, causing devastation in sixteen provinces and six hundred cities.

In 1851 Hung-sew-tsuen commenced his march through China, establishing himself in 1853 in Nanking, the ancient capital of the Empire, which city he held until his suicide in June, 1864. Here he entirely secluded himself within the walls of a large palace, allowing no male attendant to enter beyond the outer court. Within, the Heavenly Prince was waited upon by his numerous wives and concubines. Sometimes he held levees, when his great men were allowed to approach the throne, but only his brothers and Hung-Jen—the Kan Wang (Shield King), his cousin and prime-minister—were freely admitted to his presence.

This man was in some respects the most remarkable among the Wangs. He had been trained by Dr. Legge, and employed as an assistant in the work of the London Missionary Society at Hong Kong. This he afterwards stated was the happiest period of his life. Having acquired much knowledge of the English language and of European ways, he tried for two years to reach Nanking. After many vicissitudes and narrow escapes, he joined his cousin, the Heavenly King, in 1859, and was soon afterwards appointed “Kan Wang,” the Shield King.

Hung-sew-tsuen believed, and his followers professed the same, that he was distinguished from other men

by being a younger son of God and the brother of Jesus Christ, with whom he was co-equal, and that he was commissioned to give a new revelation to mankind.

The missionaries resident in Shanghai were naturally desirous of ascertaining by personal observation the exact state of affairs among the Taipings, and also their religious views and mode of life. A party of five, including Mr. John, visited Soochow, not however without passing through some novel experiences. Mr. John says that the events of twelve months seemed to be condensed into a week. The second night they were in danger of being set upon by enraged and suspicious villagers. They learned the next day that at one time the gongs were about to be beaten to summon all the people to action. After the missionaries had explained matters the crowd dispersed. The third night, the boats were anchored between the fire of the villagers and insurgents. The fourth night, the most trying of all, they spent among dead bodies that were floating in the canal. For two or three hundred yards the boats had to be pushed through heaps of bodies in an advanced state of decomposition. Many of these people had been killed by the insurgents, but the larger number were cases of suicide.

Upon arriving at Soochow the missionaries were received in a very friendly way by Li-sen-cheng, who was entitled the Chung Wang (Faithful King). This man joined the rebellion, under compulsion, as a private soldier, and had risen to be a great fighting chief. Upon the nomination of his cousin, Hung-Jen-Kan, as the Kan Wang (Shield King), the Tien Wang (Heavenly Monarch), found it necessary to make his two most able generals Wangs also. So Li-sen-cheng was called Chung Wang, and Chin-Y-ching was made Ying Wang (Heroic King). The latter was also called Sz'-yan Kow, the Four-eyed Dog.

In addition to his remarkable military successes,



the Chung Wang had the character of a good man, opposing the excesses of his troops and protecting the suffering people.

The visitors had to wait for an hour and a half, as the Ying Wang was paying a visit to his brother chief. They were then conducted, amid the firing of petards, music, and beating of gongs, to the entrance hall, where a long train of 100 officers and servants, clothed in robes and caps of red and yellow silk, stood facing each other in two rows. Upon stating their objection to kneeling before the great man, they were allowed to bow, and stand for a minute in front of him. They were then conducted to the right of the Wang, and stood there during the audience.

The missionaries told the king the object of their visit, and he mentioned several leading Christian doctrines, and was satisfied to find that Western nations believed in them. He asked if they had other subjects to bring forward, and they said that some of their countrymen were engaged in trade. It would be satisfactory if the silk trade in the provinces occupied by his troops was not obstructed. He replied that the celestial king desired this, and would levy customs accordingly. He willingly accepted a present of Bibles and books, and invited the party to remain for a few days. They then retired, after the same salute as when entering, and were conducted on horses to the house of Lien, a high officer, who hospitably entertained them for the rest of the evening, when upon their request they were taken to the boats.

They observed that the Taipings had destroyed the idols everywhere; and on the walls of the temple at Pa-chih was a proclamation exhorting the people to desert bad superstition and worship the Heavenly Father; also to bring tribute to the ruler of the new dynasty. If they acted thus they would be well treated, otherwise they must expect punishment.

The leaders of the rebels were acquainted with many Christian truths, and always addressed the missionaries as "our foreign brethren," saying, "We worship the same Heavenly Father, and believe in the same Elder Brother (Jesus Christ), why should we be at variance?" The soldiers, however, were not a promising class of men.

The Taipings at this time were buoyant with hope, and said that, judging from the aspect of affairs, two years would be ample time for them to accomplish their task of overthrowing the Imperial Government.

Soon after the return of the missionaries to Shanghai, two letters were received by Mr. Edkins and Mr. John. One from the Chung Wang, and the other from Hung Jen, the Kan Wang, inviting them to Soochow to see the Kan Wang. They felt constrained to go, and also very anxious about this man, to encourage him in his praiseworthy endeavours to spread the truth among the rebels, and to suggest plans for his consideration.

They were surprised to find that the farthest Imperial military station was only ten miles from Shanghai, and that beyond that country they did not meet another person all the way to Soochow. They passed a floating bridge made by Imperialists and left with the insurgents. A proclamation had been put up exhorting the people to attend quietly to their trades, and bring in presents as obedient subjects.

One of the country people said, "It matters little who is Emperor, whether Hien-fung (who then reigned) or Hung-sew-tsuen, provided we are left in our usual peace and quiet." This was the universal sentiment.

The country was devastated and deserted. Where once flourishing cities had been, and business marts, only ruins remained. The most of the places were burnt by the Imperialists. While the insurgents had committed some excesses, the people declared that

they were done by the recruits, and that the old rebels, who had been better taught, had been humane in their treatment.

The missionaries reached Soochow on August 2nd, 1860, and had an interview with the Kan Wang on the same day. He made many inquiries about his old friends in the Mission at Shanghai, and was pleased to hear of the converts made in various places, as well as the revival in the West. "The kingdom of Christ," said he, "must spread, and overcome every opposition; whatever may become of the celestial dynasty, there can be no doubt concerning this matter." He then doffed his state robes, dismissed his attendants, and had a confidential conversation. The missionaries accepted his invitation to dinner, and before partaking, at the Kan Wang's proposal, they sang a hymn and prayed. He selected one of Dr. Medhurst's hymns, and started the tune himself with correctness and warmth. The conversation was exclusively upon religious topics, as he did not seem to wish to talk about anything else.

He said his object in going to Nanking was to preach the Gospel; but upon asking permission of his cousin the Taiping Wang, he would not hear of it, and insisted upon promoting Hung Jen. Although devoted to the rebel cause, he repeatedly said that he was happier when an assistant missionary at Hong Kong than as the Shield King of the Taipings.

The following day the missionaries visited Hung Jen, and found him much agitated. His letters to the representatives of foreign powers had been returned, and he was informed by a foreign merchant, the bearer of the letters, that Shanghai was occupied by British and French troops. The first act he regarded as an insult, the second as a breach of neutrality. The missionaries said they could not do more than feel sympathy for him, and they had a long conversation with him, after which they sung, and the Kan Wang prayed fervently that pure Christianity might

soon become the religion of China. After this never-to-be-forgotten spectacle, the missionaries received some presents and returned home.

They were much gratified with their visit, and pleased to find the Kan Wang a devout worshipper of God, and a constant reader of the Scriptures and other Christian books.

At this time the city of Sung Kiang was re-taken by the rebels, and the flourishing church founded and cared for by Mr. John scattered again.

Even in Shanghai little direct mission work could be done as the people were very excited. This excitement, however, left the missionaries at liberty to care for the Nanking refugees, of whom Mr. Edkins and Mr. John had from 150 to 200 under special instruction. The earnest appeals of the missionaries at this time for prayer, that this turmoil might be reduced to order, can easily be understood.

On August 8th, a few days after Mr. John's return from Soochow, the insurgents attacked Shanghai. They had a sharp engagement with, and utterly discomfited the Imperialists a short distance from the city. Then marching straight up to the city gate, they would have taken the place with ease had it not been for the shot and grape which the allied British and French troops poured into their midst. They attempted to communicate with the foreign officers upon the walls, but to no purpose. On Monday morning they were seen marching towards the race-course, and were immediately driven back.

It was clear that the insurgents had no intention of injuring foreigners or their property. The missionaries afterwards heard that the insurgents were amazed at the manner of their reception, especially as they had received no official intimation that the allied forces intended to hold the city and resist them. After this repulse they soon disappeared.

Though checked at Shanghai, the rebels were most

active elsewhere, and another formidable insurrection broke out in the province of Shan-si.

Thus things continued throughout the autumn of 1860, when Mr. John resolved to go boldly to Nanking, the seat of the Taiping Government, and endeavour to obtain from the Tien Wang an edict of religious toleration. He was accompanied by Mr. Kloekers, of the English Baptist Mission, and two native brethren who spoke the Canton dialect. The distance to Nanking was about 250 miles, and they were received with marked respect and treated as brethren in all the towns they passed through. The journey was a complete success, and the edict obtained gave permission to all missionaries, whether Protestant or Catholic, to live in the insurgents' territory and carry on mission work. The wording of this edict is in some parts high-flown, but that was unavoidable, seeing it was written by the Tien Wang's eldest son, who was about twelve years old. His father requested him to write it, being anxious that he should feel interested in the propagation of the Gospel. The following extracts however give the meaning of the whole:—

“I learn that the foreign teacher Griffith John and his friends, esteeming the kingdom of Heaven and reverencing and believing in my Father (God) and my adopted Father (Christ) . . . have come for the express purpose of requesting permission to spread abroad the true doctrine. Seeing, however, that the present is a time of war, and that the soldiers are scattered abroad in every direction, I am afraid that the missionaries might be injured by following the rabble soldiery, and that thus serious consequences might ensue. Still I truly perceive that these (missionaries) are sincere and faithful men, and that they count it nothing to suffer with Christ, and because of this I esteem them very highly.

“Let the Kings (Wangs) inform all the officers and





STREET SCENE IN SHANGHAI.

others that they must all act lovingly and harmoniously towards these men, and by no means engender contention and strife . . . . . and let these (missionaries) be treated exceedingly well. Respect this."

Although the Taipings fell into many grievous errors, the seeds of Christianity were doubtless in the hearts of the leaders and those who had long joined the revolt. They did one good thing, by creating a vacuum, not only in the temples, destroying the idols, but also in the hearts of the people. It was the work of the missionary to fill up this void. With reference to the edict Mr. John said, "They have done this not in ignorance, but with their eyes quite open to the difference which exists between them and ourselves."

The great fighting chief Chung Wang, who was at Nanking, asked Mr. John to inform the Foreign Brethren for him that the following were his views:—

"You have had the Gospel for upwards of 1,800 years; we only, as it were, eight days. Your knowledge of it ought to be correct and extensive, ours must necessarily be limited and imperfect. You must therefore bear with us for the present, and we will gradually improve. As for the Gospel it is one, and must be propagated throughout the world. Let the Foreign Brethren all know that we are determined to uproot idolatry, and plant Christianity in its place."

Mr. John also confirmed this determination by writing, "All the way up from Soochow to Nanking, the idols are destroyed." He also informed the Directors of the London Missionary Society that "the rebels were centuries ahead of the Imperialists."

Mr. John fully intended leaving Shanghai to reside in Nanking, but after much thought and consultation with his senior brethren, he thought it would be premature to do so then, as communication between the places was nearly severed, and he would be dependent upon the rebels for support. This dependence, he feared, would undermine his influence and injure

the mission. Another British expedition was also about to proceed up the Yang-tsi, and he mentions the probable opening of the ports of Hankow and Kin Kiang. He says, in making this first mention of Hankow, "It should by all means be occupied by our Society. A more important or inviting sphere of missionary labour China does not present." This forecast has been amply fulfilled. The Rev. Dr. Mullens, the late Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society, whose acquaintance with and experience of Missions in many lands constituted him a competent judge, said years after, when he had visited Hankow, "It is the finest mission station in the world."

The matter for immediate decision was how should he employ the winter. A number of young brethren, who arrived in the autumn of 1859, were able to assist the senior missionaries in the limited work about Shanghai, and Mr. John determined to join the Rev. Joseph Edkins at Chefoo, in the province of Shantung. With his usual promptness he arranged his affairs, and arrived at Chefoo at the close of December, 1860.

The new treaty between England and China opened up the northern provinces to direct mission work, and Mr. John, soon after arriving at Chefoo, writes: "Whilst our hearts overflow with joy at the extensive field so suddenly and marvellously opened up, we are ready to despond at the inadequacy of the means. What is one station and two missionaries for the whole Shang-tung province, with its twenty-nine millions of human souls; or for the twenty-eight millions of Chih-li; or the teeming millions that line the banks of the mighty Yang-tsi? Nothing, absolutely nothing! Will the Church, unfaithful to her Head, and false to herself, as the depository of the blessings of light and life for the world, look on with indifference?"

The two missionaries were not appalled. With God

on their side they felt assured of success ; and being active and enterprising men, they soon visited nearly all the towns and villages in the neighbourhood of Chefoo.

The scenery in this province is exquisitely beautiful. The mountain of Tai Shan is one of the highest in China, and is also celebrated for the magnificent temples which cover its sides and base. In the spring the roads to it are covered with pilgrims desirous of paying their vows and offering prayers. The Shang-tung province is also famous owing to its containing the birth-places of *Confucius* and *Mencius*. The tomb of the former, who died B.C. 479 at Kih-feu, is a majestic monument embosomed in a forest of oaks.

Mr. John was much pleased with the people, who are more manly than those of the south. Idolatry had not so firm a hold upon them, and many seemed to be more susceptible of religious impressions, having a distinct notion of a Supreme Spiritual Being. Their disposition to clannishness, which is a marked social feature, was also thought would be helpful to the progress of the Gospel. Many villages, with from 500 to 5,000 people, were found to be composed entirely of one or two families, and to influence one person meant to influence all ; whilst the conversion of one of the principal men would be followed by the respectful attention of the whole clan to the truth.

On January 4th, the missionaries visited the district city of Fuh Shan, and called upon the Mandarin to inquire whether he had any objection to their renting a house. He received them kindly, and said that as both nations were now one family, there could be no objection on his part. A house was rented accordingly, and the Gospel preached there daily.

January the 24th saw the missionaries on ponies journeying towards the cities of Tung Cheu-fu and

Hwang-hien. Their books and luggage followed upon mules. They found that the people of this region slept upon *nikangs*; these are square or oblong mounds of earth, heated at night by a flue which runs through them. The fire often goes out before morning; and then, instead of giving, they absorb heat. The people of South China avoid them on that account. The missionaries, however, were fortunate enough to find wooden bedsteads.

The fare procurable in travelling was very humble, but they had ample compensation for their privations in the attention paid to their preaching. Several hearers made themselves known as former listeners to the doctrine at Shanghai.

Mr. Edkins being unwell, their progress was slow. Immediately they arrived at Tung Cheu they were led to a comfortable inn, where messengers from each of the Mandarin officers waited upon them to inquire into their history.

“Your honourable names?”

“Your honourable country?”

“Whence are you from?”

“Whither are you going?”

“What public office do you fill?”

These and many similar questions were put by each messenger.

Mr. John spent Sunday in preaching and distributing books along the streets. Besides attentive audiences, he was followed by large crowds influenced by motives of curiosity; some, however, had a serious intention to learn what the new doctrine really was.

On the following day he rode over to Hwang-hien alone, preached and distributed books for an hour-and-a-half. The books were eagerly sought after, but some cautious ones refused to accept them because it was the *first time books had been given away there, and they doubted the propriety or safety of doing so.* This



city, though large, is inferior to Tung Cheu in rank, population, or beauty of situation.

The following day they left Tung-cheu, with its 150,000 people and glorious scenery. Their regrets at being able to devote so little time to such a fine position for mission work, were soon after removed by the settlement there of Mr. Hartwel, a missionary of the American Baptist Society. The insurgents were at this time making rapid strides in Shantung, and had approached within thirty miles of the provincial capital. The Tartar prince, Sung Wang, was twice defeated by them. This weakness of the Tartar Mandarins was fortunate for the mission work, as these Manchu potentates hated Christianity, and had set their faces like iron against it. Mr. John wrote then, what soon proved to be true words, "The repeated defeats and complete discomfiture of the Tartar hosts in the north have thoroughly undermined the Manchu power. It must fall. There is no power in China to uphold it. The Kwangsi insurrection must triumph if foreign powers do not interfere. The Manchus might as well attempt to blow the sun out of the heavens, as to quench this flame which their folly and tyranny have kindled."

This portion of Mr. John's missionary labours was soon to close, to enable him to enter upon that sphere of usefulness with which his name is now indissolubly associated.

China was in a most interesting and exciting crisis, and he recognised it. Writing to the Society, he said, "What the fathers of the London Missionary Society desired to see, but did not see, and what Morrison, Milne, Medhurst, and others laboured diligently, prayerfully, and with tears to obtain, but did not obtain, we now see and possess. The whole Imperialist territory is now opened by the recent treaty, and that of the insurgents by the edict which I had the honour and privilege to procure through the Kan Wang. . . .

Shall the four hundred millions of China remain in their state of darkness and death because of the worldliness and deadness of the people of God? Shall not the cry which now goes forth from this land penetrate our universities, colleges, and churches, and elicit a response in many a heart devoted to Christ, worthy of the urgency and solemnity of the occasion?"





## CHAPTER IV.

### FOUNDING OF THE HANKOW MISSION.



“ Come back, thou holy love, so rudely banished,  
 When evil came, and hate, and fear, and wrong ;  
 Return, thou joyous light, so quickly vanished ;  
 Revive, thou life that death hath quenched so long !

“ Re-fix, re-knit, the chain so harshly broken,  
 That bound this lower orb to yon bright heaven ;  
 Hang out on high the ever golden token,  
 That tells of earth renewed and man forgiven.

“ Withdraw the veil that has for ages hidden  
 That upper kingdom from this nether sphere ;  
 Renew the fellowship so long forbidden ;  
 O God, Thyself take up Thy dwelling here.”

DR. BONAR.



ONE of the greatest aids to mission work in China, is the network of rivers and canals, which make so many parts of that vast empire easy of access. Foremost among these is the river Yang-tsi. It is known in China by the terms, the *Son of the Ocean*, the “Great River,” the “Girdle of China,” etc. The largest steamers can ascend it during four or five months of the year for more than 1,000 miles, whilst Hankow, which is 780 miles up, is accessible to ocean steamers at all times of the year. The river presented

a remarkable appearance when Mr. John first ascended it. From Nanking upwards, it had overflowed its banks; and where, in ordinary times it is confined to a channel of a mile, it then spread out from ten to fifteen miles. At some places it was completely lost in the embraces of the horizon, and seemed like an inland sea. In other places tops of trees could be seen, and roofs of houses with people clinging to them. Sometimes the god of the land and grain was found seated on a high mound, having been taken from his watery shrine by some worshipper, who believed in his power to save and bless others though unable to help himself.

At eleven o'clock on the night of the 21st of June, 1861, Mr. John and Mr. Wilson arrived at Hankow. It was a beautiful moonlight night. All along the walls of the Wuchang, and on the top of the Han Yang hill, hundreds of lanterns were hung. These were lighted every night by a coolie, and answered the same purpose as the wooden "Quaker guns" did in the American civil war, viz.: frighten the rebels, as there were no soldiers to defend either the walls or the hills.

Mr. John had heard of, read about, and many a time longed to visit this great emporium of China.

The two cities of Wuchang and Han Yang, and the town of Hankow, occupy the points formed by the junction of the river Yang-tsi with its tributary the Han. The morning after they arrived, the missionaries ascended the Han Yang hill, and had a glorious view. The Yang-tsi had overflowed its banks to a larger extent than for many years previously, and completely surrounded Hankow, which occupies a flat site. Twelve years previously there had been a great flood, and the water rose twelve feet higher than in 1861. Upon that occasion, most of the houses were partly under water, the people living in the upper storeys, and carrying on business by boats. This en-



CHINESE LANTERN SHOP.



tailed a serious loss to the inhabitants, but it was as nothing in comparison with the destruction wrought by the rebels. They had visited it four times. On the first three occasions, the people were not molested, and property was respected; but on the last visit the people, compelled by the mandarins, offered resistance. The consequence was fearful, and the whole place was converted into a burning heap. Such, however, was its inherent vitality, that Mr. John thought it presented the appearance of a most flourishing mart, and would regain its pristine glory within a year if peace were restored. The people, however, lamented and sighed whenever a comparison was instituted between its past and present condition. Its population had been about one million and a half. Its shops, store-houses, and temples, were proverbial for their grandeur and beauty. People from eighteen provinces met here to exchange the varied products of the great empire. The people told Mr. John that the principal street which ran beside the banks of the rivers Han and Yang-tsi, was in former days twelve miles in length. He says, "Well have the Chinese applied the terms '*Centre of the Empire*' and '*the Heart of the Empire*' to Hankow. Give us peace: and from a missionary point of view, it rises up before my vision in magnificent grandeur. From this point a missionary can penetrate the whole empire with ease."

Mr. John, with his characteristic promptitude, commenced preaching on the first day; and from that time to the present, Hankow has had the Gospel daily proclaimed by an ever-increasing number of missionaries. The people were found to be remarkably lively, much more so than any he had previously seen, and they not only formed attentive audiences, but eagerly and thankfully read the books offered to them.

Mr. John and his companion soon *prospected* the place, and saw that it offered unparalleled opportunities for a mission centre, in spite of the dis-

couraging state of affairs caused by civil war. The country from Chun-Kiang to Hankow had for ten years been a vast battle-field or camp. Cities had been lost and won again and again. The river had been almost blocked up, trade suspended, and flourishing cities reduced to a state of utter wretchedness.

But missionary work engrossed their attention; a house was secured, and preaching continued. The insurgents had announced some Christian truths, and the names of God and Jesus were recognised by some of the people, who, in two or three cases, objected to them as being identical with the doctrine of the "Monsters," as the rebels were termed.

On the 6th of August, Mr. John left in a native boat for Shanghai, to remove his family to Hankow. On the way down a terrible squall was encountered, which threatened immediate destruction to the crazy craft. The crew, with the exception of one man, lost all presence of mind, and having given up all as lost, sat down trembling like so many aspen leaves. The storm, however, soon passed away. Mr. John returned in safety with his family on the 12th of September, and speedily resumed his work with great energy.

As they had not a regular chapel, preaching was conducted for several hours daily in a large hall in Mr. John's house. He was aided by his two native assistants. The ever-changing audience was composed of people from eighteen different provinces, whom business had called to Hankow, besides numbers of the natives of that place. Many were very anxious in inquiring about the religion of Jesus. The questions asked indicated that they were far more inquisitive than any people he had hitherto met. Several came again for books and portions of Scripture, and one man surprised Mr. John by the knowledge he had acquired, and the correctness and fluency with which he talked about God the Father,

atonement by the death of Jesus, Paul the Apostle, and such subjects.

Mr. John, with that conciliatory method which he has always adopted towards those in authority, presented the Tau-tai (governor of the city) with a copy of the New Testament and some scientific works. His Excellency called upon Mr. John soon after, and caused some astonishment by exhibiting much more interest in the New Testament than in the other books.

In August, 1861, Hien-fung, the Emperor of China, died. He had long been under the power of a number of officials influenced by reactionary principles, who wished to have no intercourse with foreigners and to sweep all such out of the Flowery Land.

The deceased monarch was only twenty-six years of age when he died, but he had allowed unworthy favourites to lead him into sensual indulgences. Chief among these favourites was the avaricious and cruel Su-Shun, who with the princes of I and Ching, members of the extreme anti-foreign party, formed a council of Regency to take care of the new boy-emperor, then eight years old.

These officials, however, did not possess the sympathy of any party, and had long been discredited in the eyes of the people by their actions. When, therefore, Prince Kung, brother of the deceased Emperor, made his *coup d'état* on November the 3rd, 1861, he not only had the Empress-mother, but the officers and organs of the Government, as well as the people, on his side. The members of the Council of Regency were apprehended, and kept as prisoners in their own houses; their effects and wealth were sequestered, and their power was assumed by Prince Kung and the Empress-mother.

According to Chinese ideas Su-Shun was responsible for the misgovernment of the late Emperor. He was accordingly separated from his troops and guards,



SU-SHUN, REGENT OF CHINA.

while following the Emperor's coffin into the palace at Peking, and placed in confinement. After the *coup d'état* he was degraded to the rank of a private soldier, and brought in a common cart to the Cabbage Market, Peking, dressed in an ordinary sheepskin. Dr. Lockart, who was the only European eye-witness of what followed, states that he alighted, looking very savage and enraged. Pausing, he was surrounded by a number of high officials, and in a few moments he was obliged to kneel. The officers bowed towards him, and with one blow the executioner struck off his head.

This revolution had a most important bearing on the Empire of China. Its policy towards Foreign Powers was reversed; Prince Kung being shrewd enough to see that it was impossible for China successfully to resist them, and yet to prosper.

The influence of this change in the government was speedily felt all over the Empire, and aided by the defeats which China had received from the Western Powers, and the troubles occasioned by the Taipings and other rebels, it humbled the national pride and made the people more docile and susceptible of impressions from without. The presence of foreigners at Hankow gave a greater feeling of security to the people, and this tended to promote their favourable disposition. The magistrates were very friendly disposed towards Mr. John. The district magistrate visited him twice, and wrote some kind letters; while the Lieutenant Governor sent him a proclamation to be posted on his door, commanding the soldiers and people not to injure or molest foreigners under the severest penalty. Mr. John availed himself of this friendliness to speak of Christ in the highest circle of society at Hankow. Being invited to breakfast by a mandarin friend, a number of guests were asked to meet him, among whom was a Hu-nan military mandarin. This gentleman boasted of the glory and martial courage



of the Hu-nan men, and said there was no danger of their ever believing in Jesus or of His religion taking root there.

"Slowly, my friend," said Mr. John, "the Hu-nan people know not His person and character, and therefore cannot believe in Him just now; but ere long they will be better acquainted with Him, and who knows but that many will turn to Him."

"Never," said the mandarin, "they have Confucius, and Jesus cannot be compared with him."

"He is infinitely superior: the one is from the earth, and the other from heaven. We have sages in abundance in the Western world, but we never think of instituting a comparison between them and Christ."

"But," said the mandarin, "all sages are heaven (God) sent."

"Christ," replied Mr. John, "is not only God sent, but God incarnate—God manifested in the flesh."

This doctrine offended the pride of the mandarin, as it does that of every age and country. It, however, led to some further conversation, to the great delight of the missionary.

Early in the year 1862, Mr. John reported steady progress, evolved by the blessing of God from careful and unremitting toil. Until then he had been all alone at Hankow. Soon after the new year he was joined by two native assistants, both natives of Nanking. Several earnest inquirers had appeared; but being part of the large floating population of Hankow, they soon left the place. Every afternoon the hall was filled with people, for four or five hours, to whom Mr. John and his two native assistants preached. He often questioned the audience, and was several times struck with the extent and correctness of their information.

One day he asked his hearers who God was.

A man boldly and promptly replied, "God is the Creator of heaven, earth, and all things."

"Is God a Spirit?"

"Yes."

"How many Gods are there?"

"One."

"But the Chinese worship many gods; what have you to say to that?"

"They are all false, the creations of man's imagination, or dead men 'promoted to the rank of gods by men!'"

"Are apotheosized men really gods?"

"Certainly not; they have the name, but not the reality."

"What of 'Yü-'hwang,' the god that is so universally and highly honoured by the nation?"

"He also is a *made* god, and not a true God."

"Who is Jesus Christ?"

"The Son of God."

"Is He God?"

"Yes."

"Why did He come into the world?"

"He came to save men."

"How does He save men?"

"He died to redeem them."

"Where are you from?"

"From Hwang-Chew." (A city about fifty miles from Hankow.)

"Where did you hear these things?"

"Here."

"How often have you heard the Gospel preached?"

"I heard it *two or three times last year*, and took some of your books with me home. I have come here to-day to hear you again and to beg for more books."

This is only a specimen of many of the hearers, and exhibits the advantages of the Protestant method of teaching over the Roman Catholic form, which has been carried on in China for more than five hundred years. The foreign priest does not preach or come

in contact with any save inquirers, brought to him by his native agents. Even the native agents do not preach publicly, but go about quietly among their immediate acquaintances. Only occasionally do they give books to their converts.

The Protestant method is that of publishing loudly to all who wish to listen, and of scattering books and tracts as widely as possible. Its advantage is palpable, as the Catholic priest may remain years in a place without his presence being known to many beyond his converts, whereas the Protestant missionary is known to thousands on his arrival as the teacher of a new doctrine. Hundreds hear daily, and soon know the principal facts. These become topics of conversation and discussion in the family, the tea-shop, and other public places. To talk, to question, and to doubt are all essential steps to a change of mind. Another advantage of Protestant teaching is that a missionary who is stationary in a city, may even influence distant cities and provinces, by means of the traders and visitors whom he addresses. In March, 1862, an old man came to hear Mr. John, who asked whether he had heard the Gospel before. He replied that he had heard it many years ago from Dr. Medhurst and Mr. Muirhead at Shanghai. The old man seemed quite convinced of the folly of idolatry.

At this time many who had heard about the Gospel were wishful to enter the Church from worldly motives. Among others a smart country boy came to Mr. John with a letter. It stated that the boy wished to be instructed in the Christian religion with the view of entering the Church. Mr. John advised him to attend the daily preaching. Several days after he presented another note, and the native assistant learned from conversation that some of the country people had got the impression that all who became Christians got a small quantity of rice given to them daily, and this boy was sent to make the experiment,

others being ready to follow should he prove successful. No sooner was he undeceived than he disappeared. Mr. John was often discouraged, after an earnest exposition of the Gospel, by a Chinaman stolidly asking: "What advantage is there connected with believing in Jesus? Will it bring us any rice? How many *cash* does a man *receive* on entering the Church?" Such is a Chinaman!

At this time Mr. John wrote, "Very few conversions, genuine turnings to God, do we witness in China. It is a hard field. Notwithstanding the labour bestowed, it has yielded but little fruit. Sometimes I feel very much discouraged, and am ready to faint. *Satan sometimes talks to me the most hellish logic*; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, I have been able to persevere hitherto, and shall by His help persevere unto the end. *Pray for me.*"

On Sunday, the 16th of March, 1862, exactly one month after the above was penned, the first convert in connection with the Protestant Mission at Hankow was baptized, and on the 8th of June six others—four men and two women—followed. The greatest depth of religious feeling shown was by one who had been a devotee of the sect of Kwan-yin. This man seemed as though he had felt a spiritual want; but in spite of the comparatively high aims of his sect its discipline had failed in his moral renovation, and he had not been able to meet with anything to satisfy his craving until the light of the Gospel shone into his mind.

At the close of twelve months' labour the infant Church at Hankow numbered twelve members. After admission they were carefully disciplined and trained to self-government. A small collection of hymns was prepared by Mr. John, in such a style as to be intelligent to all, without violently offending the taste of those refined in letters. He also prepared a tract with a view to answering the questions usually put by his hearers.

On the 12th of August, 1863, Mr. John had to mourn the death by dysentery of his colleague, the Rev. R. Wilson, B.A., after a few days' illness. He was a very persevering man, humble-minded, and sure in judgment. Mr. John felt the loss keenly, as in addition to his high character, Mr. Wilson would have been an able Chinese scholar and a very efficient missionary. His four years' missionary course was just long enough to allow his fellow-workers to learn his value and anticipate a successful career. They saw instead a bright and happy close to his earthly life.

Mr. John asked his dying colleague for his parting blessing.

He answered: "My blessing is of poor value; however, may God bless you—in your own soul, in your health, and in your family—in each member of it. And may He bless you in your work; in the Native Church; and oh! may you have many, many souls, as the crown of your rejoicing in that day."

The recipient of that blessing has had its possession confirmed to him by many signs from the Holy Spirit.

Soon after his arrival at Hankow, Mr. John's attention was directed to the neighbouring city of Wuchang, as a most desirable place for mission work. It is the provincial capital of Hu-peh, and the seat of the Viceroy of the two provinces of Hu-peh and Hu-nan. Lying on the right bank of the Yang-tsi, opposite the departmental city of Han-yang and near to Hankow, its walls are about ten miles in circumference, and its population is about four hundred thousand. In addition to occupying a beautiful position, it is politically one of the most important cities in the Empire.

Mr. John saw that here lay the key to the two provinces; and that if Wuchang could be opened to the Protestant missionary, the provinces also would be accessible.



Never did a strategist lay bolder plans or more steadfastly pursue them ; never was human character and institutions studied to better purpose, or words and actions used by diplomatist with more subtle intelligence. One of the native evangelists at Hankow was sent over to rent a house ; but found that the people, though willing to let their houses, were afraid to do so without the permission of the mandarins.

As the authorities had to be consulted, Mr. John resolved to save much time and labour by going at once to the fountain-head, and pay a visit to the Viceroy. He paved the way by a present of religious and scientific books.

Kwan, the Viceroy, was acquainted with Mr. John's position, and also had the character of being generous in spirit and friendly disposed towards foreigners. After waiting two hours in the ante-room, Mr. John was admitted to the Mandarin, who came to meet him, and insisted upon his taking the seat of honour, whilst he himself sat below.

In thanking Mr. John for the books, the Viceroy put some questions in reference to the authorship and meaning of the New Testament. He also asked the missionary's opinion on the three religions of China, and begged to be informed in what Christianity differs from them.

Mr. John gladly availed himself of this opportunity. Of course the Mandarin was far too polite to contradict or even to appear to dissent, that would have been a fearful breach of etiquette. Though probably he did not believe a word of the missionary's statement, he *seemed* to devour all greedily. To the proposal that Mr. John should enter Wuchang, he had one or two slight objections on the score of the *happiness and safety* of the missionary. The people were ignorant and stupid ; and while he would be happy to have missionaries there, and be on friendly terms

with them, he could not bear the thought of their exposing themselves to insults and danger.

Mr. John replied that "the missionary was prepared to endure much if necessary; but that in a city in which the Viceroy resided, and over which he exercised supreme control, such a necessity ought never to arise."

"Well," rejoined his Excellency, "if these objections are not important in your judgment, you have my permission. Both nations are now one, and there is nothing impracticable."

"Good, very good," replied Mr. John; "your sentiments are true and noble; and now that both nations are one, and nothing impracticable, perhaps you would have no objection to issue a proclamation to tell the people that they may let their houses, or if you prefer it, to give me a private letter which I might show those whom it might concern."

In the blandest manner the Viceroy said that it was not necessary to do either the one or the other, as he would inform the district magistrate of the fact, and request him to do all that might be necessary to ensure success.

A quiet repast of soup and cakes followed the conversation, and Mr. John departed.

He knew the verbal promise would be of little immediate use; but he was glad to have it, as it would make it difficult for the local authorities to expel him, if he ever were able to get into the city.

Thinking it worth while to test his Excellency's promise, a native evangelist was sent over the river to make another trial. He soon found that the mandarins had got the start of him. In every case one of the first questions put to him was, "Yes, we have a house to let; but pray for whom do you want it? Is it for a foreigner?" It was of no use to tell them that the foreign pastor had seen the Viceroy, and obtained his permission. "They did not believe

in mere 'mouth promise.' It might do for the foreigner. Let the pastor get a proclamation posted on the walls, and they would be satisfied."

Doubtless the first thing Kwan did, after the interview with Mr. John, was to issue private instructions to the citizens that land must neither be let nor sold to a foreigner in the city of Wuchang.

Mr. John then called on the district magistrate, who



INTERIOR OF A YAMEN OR MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE.

was engaged with the military examination, so he addressed a letter to him saying that he had seen the Viceroy, who had given him permission to reside in the city, and had also promised to inform the magistrate and ask for the necessary aid. Mr. John would be greatly obliged by the magistrate informing the people, as they were afraid to let or sell land without his permission.

A beautiful, polite, yet absurd note, such as only a Chinese official could write, came in reply, acknowledging Mr. John's rights to reside in the city, and anything within his power he would willingly do. His Excellency having said "Yes," it was not for him to say "No"; but from time immemorial magistrates have never interfered with the private property of the people, and therefore he could do nothing in the matter. He would advise Mr. John to go among the people and try to buy or rent, and, if successful, his friendship and help might be calculated upon in time of need.

This reply, although possessing a value for future use, was worse than worthless at that time.

Mr. John allowed some weeks to pass by, although fully determined to persevere. About December, 1863, he felt it was time to renew the attempt. The effort to buy or rent in his *own name* had failed. Moreover, it seemed doubtful whether a foreigner could rightfully own property except at the Treaty ports. It struck him that the best thing was to instruct the principal evangelist to buy in *his* name for the native Church, feeling certain that if the religious toleration clause meant anything he had a right as a Christian to do so. The plan was laid before the evangelist as soon as matured, and he took it up immediately. One of the Church deacons, a native of Wuchang, promised his help. They were charged to adhere strictly to the truth, and by no means deny, if asked, that it was intended to build a chapel upon the land.

In a few days the land was bought. No time was lost in getting the deeds registered at the Mandarin's office, and in obtaining the official signature.

With these documents in his possession, Mr. John could afford to smile at the storm which mandarin rage might create, and he exultingly made the following entry in his Journal on the day upon which the land was bought:

“January the 20th, 1864.—A piece of ground has been bought to-day in Wuchang for the Native Church. The site is in one of the principal streets, and the ground is about 60 feet wide by 160 long. On this I hope to be able to put up suitable buildings after the festivities of the Chinese New Year are over. I anticipate difficulties yet; but, with God’s blessing, the attempt will be successful.”

The former owner promised to have the land cleared, and to hand it over by the end of March. Before that, however, the mandarins found out what was going on. The landholder was summoned before the departmental magistrate, and charged with the crime of having sold his land to a foreigner. He denied the charge, and said what was strictly true, that he did not know that a foreigner had anything to do with it.

“Well,” said the Mandarin, “if you do not know to whom you were selling the ground, I know for what purpose it was bought. You go at once and see Shen-tsi-sin—Mr. John’s assistant—and tell him that if he intends the ground for his own private use he may keep it, but that if he intends it for religious purposes he had better have nothing more to do with it, as he values his life.” This message was delivered on the 1st of April, and on the following day Mr. John wrote a letter to the magistrate, to the following effect:—

“I am an Englishman, and a missionary of the religion of Jesus. According to the treaty of Tientsin, all who preach and teach Christianity are entitled to the protection and kind consideration of the magistrates. Natives also, who profess or teach Christianity, are entitled to the same privileges. Moreover, a British subject is entitled to all the rights, privileges, and favours which may be conferred on the subjects of any other government. Now, if the natives of this place have a right to profess and propagate the



Christian religion, they have surely the right to procure the necessary buildings for that purpose; and if British subjects have a right to all the privileges enjoyed by the subjects of other governments, then I, as a missionary of the religion of Jesus, have the right to be in Wuchang, where priests of the Roman Catholic religion are. Besides all this, on my arrival here I called on the Viceroy to inform him of my office and the nature of my work, and to ask his permission to carry on my work in Wuchang.

“His Excellency received me very politely, and, in the presence of the Rev. J. Cox (Wesleyan missionary) and of several Chinese officials, he openly told me that he gave me his permission, adding the remark that, the two nations being one, there was nothing impracticable. You cannot suppose that so great a man as his Excellency would act without thought, talk empty sounds, or was capable of eating his words. Again, in reply to my letter, the district magistrate acknowledges the fact that the Viceroy had given his permission, and requests me to go among the people myself to buy or rent; and he assures me that I may calculate on his willingness to render me every help within the limits of his power. This letter is now in my possession, and may be produced whenever needed.

“Thus having the right by treaty to carry on my work in Wuchang, and having the permission of the highest authority in these two provinces to do so, and having been advised by the district magistrate to try and rent or purchase without his aid, I requested our principal native assistant to go and buy a piece of land. The land was soon bought and paid for, and the title-deeds were officially registered and sealed. I enclose a copy of the old deed, so that you may see that the transaction was in every respect regular and valid. Having thus done everything in strict conformity with the great principles of justice

and mutual regard, I was surprised to learn yesterday that the former owner of the ground would not hand it over, because the magistrates declare that the missionary has no right to reside and carry on his work in the city of Wuchang. Can this be true? Has not the landlord mistaken his Excellency's meaning? Have the goodness to inquire into the matter, and please command the parties concerned to hand over the ground without delay."

To this letter Mr. John received a very polite note, promising to comply with his request and inform him of the result in a few days.

It, however, produced quite a sensation among the mandarins, who were all summoned to the Viceroy's residence. The great question under discussion was, "What can be done to keep the barbarian out?" The reasoning ran along the following lines: "It won't do to tell him he has no right to be here; for, as he says, the Roman Catholic priests are here. It is of no use objecting on the ground that he did not speak to us first, because he did speak to his Excellency; and though the promise meant nothing, still it would never do for us to say so. And then there is the letter of the district magistrate which is now in his possession. Moreover, there are the deeds duly and officially registered and sealed. What can be done?"

The acting Tau-tai of Hankow advised that they should not interfere in the matter, but allow Mr. John to take possession of the ground, as resistance would avail them nought in a case like this. His counsel was rejected. Another then suggested that Mr. John had better be told that this piece of ground was public property; that it did not belong to the person who had clandestinely sold it; that the deeds, therefore, must be returned to them and the money paid back to Mr. John, who must look out for another piece. They were all greatly charmed with this

bright idea, and doubtless thought that Wuchang might yet be saved from what appeared to them to be a great calamity. Little did they suspect that this apparently happy thought would lead to their more complete and public defeat. Certainly in this case a lie wrought against its framers. Better far would it have been for them to take time and study the character of the astute missionary with something like the closeness and intelligence which he had displayed in interpreting theirs.

Within three days the letter promised by the magistrate was received by Mr. John. It conveyed in substance the statement just mentioned as agreed upon by the mandarins.

Mr. John replied that the land must have been the private property of the man who sold it, the old deeds proving this beyond the possibility of a doubt. He assured them they would never get back the deeds on such a plea, and therefore begged them to get the land transferred without delay.

After this the matter became a subject of public interest, and was taken up by the literati, gentry, and people generally, who petitioned the magistrates not to allow the missionary to build in their famous city. Frequent deputations of two or three hundred of them would go in a body, besiege the Mandarin's office, and entreat his honour not to permit the barbarian to enter the city with his pernicious doctrine, to poison the minds of the people and subvert their customs. Placards were posted on the city walls reprobating Mr. John's attempt to build in the city of Wuchang, calling upon the people to resist it with all their might, threatening any natives who might assist with vengeance, and swearing that they would pull the buildings down as soon as they were up. These proceedings were probably instigated by the mandarins.

During this wild ferment Mr. John paid the magis-

trate two or three visits, and several letters passed between them. Seeing it was hopeless to get the missionary entirely to withdraw his claims, the magistrate shifted his ground, and endeavoured to obtain a compromise. In the one proposed it was thought that Chinese cunning and *finesse* would reap the larger advantage. The magistrate offered to get Mr. John another piece of land if he would only give up this one.

Seeing that the mandarins were wishful to come to a speedy settlement, and were only anxious to do so without appearing ridiculous by letting him have the piece which they had declared to be public property, and therefore unlawfully sold, Mr. John expressed his willingness to exchange the original piece for another equally convenient, good, and cheap.

Now the mandarins thought they really had the missionary in their power, and tried to banish him to the top of one of the hills, and, failing that, to bury him in the depths of one of the back lanes. After trying this on for a while they found it vain, and then offered such a piece as Mr. John felt he could accept. Here was a triumph for the missionary, yet it was only the first instalment of his success.

The magistrate had to show Mr. John the ground and superintend the measuring thereof. To him it must have been a humiliating task; but having been commanded to do so by his superiors, there was no alternative.

When that was done he said, "Well, what do you think of this piece of ground?" to which Mr. John replied, "I can make it do for the time being, though I don't like it so well as the other piece. If, however, you will let me have it at my own price, I will take it."

The magistrate rejoined: "We are tired of this affair, and wish to have it settled without delay. Money is not of much consideration. If you say that

you will take this piece and return the deeds of the original one, we shall be quite satisfied, and eternal peace will be established between us. What do you offer?" Mr. John mentioned his price, but said he would much prefer the other piece at the larger sum which he had paid.

After two or three days writing about the price, the land was sold to Mr. John for very little more than he had offered. This time the deeds were drawn out by the departmental and district magistrates, and were sent to Mr. John on the 16th of July, 1864; who immediately transferred them to the London Missionary Society, and as such registered them at the British Consulate, Hankow. The crowning triumph was the issuing of a proclamation by the magistrates, as soon as the matter was settled, to inform the people that the land had been bought by Mr. John, and that he had a right according to treaty to build and carry on his mission work there.

Thus was the wrath and the cunning of man made to praise and serve the purposes of God. The object of His servant was to enter and work in Wuchang. This was fully attained. That the main question was one of right of entry, and not simply the possession of land, is proved by the report of the mandarin's discussion as supplied by one of them who was present. The fierce and long contest gave the Mission such advertisement as nothing else could possibly have done; while the lie manufactured to help their cause only proved a source of weakness, and made it needful for them to issue that most valuable proclamation authorising the erection of a place of worship "for the religion of Jesus." As Wuchang is the provincial seat of government, this virtually announced to all the humiliation of the mandarins, drew the attention of officials and people in all the neighbouring cities to the missionary's success, and proclaimed the opening of both provinces for systematic mission work.



Such was the end of nearly four months' conflict with mandarins—men almost incapable of speaking the truth or acting honestly. The native deacon and the evangelist had many an anxious hour, often seeking Mr. John at midnight for consolation.

When frightened by adverse reports from Wuchang it taxed Mr. John much to keep their spirits up. Afterwards the mandarins, literati, and gentry were as quiet and urbane as possible. It ought also to be mentioned that Her Majesty's Consul helped Mr. John to the utmost extent of his power, and also earned his grateful acknowledgments for his sympathy at this trying time.

The buildings which Mr. John erected consisted of a commodious chapel, two rooms for the foreign missionary, a house for the native evangelist, and two large school-rooms; while half of the ground was left for a hospital or dispensary.

The land and buildings cost about £500, which sum was almost entirely subscribed by the "Hankow Community" of Europeans. Mr. John had only to mention his wish and the money was readily contributed.

The native evangelist, Pau-seang-sang, was put in charge. He was a highly respectable merchant, and, being in comfortable circumstances, had retired from business and devoted his time and energy to the work of the mission, to which he rendered noble service.

At the request of the Directors of the London Missionary Society, the Rev. Dr. Mullens made a visit of inspection to the several Chinese Missions, before his departure from the East to assume the position of joint secretary to the Society.

Ascending the Yang-tsi in the steamer *Po-yang*, he was painfully impressed by the state of things produced by the Taipings, and writes: "The country on the south of the river for many miles inland was fearfully desolated by the rebels, towns and cities burned

by the dozen, and the people killed by millions through slaughter, pestilence, and starvation. On the morning after our arrival we went over to Wuchang, and as I stood on the top of the hill in the centre of that city and beheld the three walled cities and the river beneath me, I could not help feeling that neither in India nor in China had I ever before looked on such a noble sphere for missionary labour. Wuchang is the governing city, and has a large population, including many families of most respectable standing and influence. Hankow is the great mart for trade, the most busy, crowded, active, wealthy place I have seen. Its chief streets and bazaars are full of handsome-shops, with abundance of valuable goods, and its smaller streets are close packed, and also full of people.

“The mission is at the north end of the native town, in an excellent and healthy position. The two mission houses, consisting of one block, are well built. They are upper-roomed, and have good verandahs on the south side, and the lower storey is raised three feet from the ground in order to keep it dry. The garden is not large, and a boys’ school is just finished along the south wall.

“The Mission Chapel is in the centre of the city, just off one of the main streets; it is an excellent building, the very thing for a bazaar chapel, and has a catechist’s house and boys’ schoolrooms behind it. I had the pleasure of hearing both Mr. Muirhead and Mr. John preach to a crowded congregation, which gathered in five minutes when the former mounted the desk and began to speak. In Wuchang again, not far from the north gate, is another chapel, also well built, with rooms for a missionary’s visit, a catechist’s house, and schools. It was with great pleasure that I examined all the work which Mr. John has accomplished for the Society in Hankow; his buildings in their plan, style, and workmanship, and

the localities in which they are placed, are most excellent.

“You must have formed, I doubt not, a high idea of the value of such a position for missionary labour, as I also had done; but in all soberness I can assure you that the reality surpassed my expectations; while in our brother, Mr. John, I have been glad to find a man in thorough accord with the highest aims of the Society, caring for its interests in every way, and executing the work entrusted to him, *as founder of the Hankow Mission*, with singular judgment and discretion.”

Such was the verdict of this most competent critic as to the material aspect of the Mission, and also the opportunities afforded for influencing the people.

At this time the Church in Hankow numbered forty-two members, with several candidates; forty-six had been baptized, but two were excommunicated, and two had died in faith; there was also a flourishing out-station established at Tsai-tien, and cared for by Lo Hiang-Yung, where there were eight members.





## CHAPTER V.

### NATIVE HELPERS—MISSION HOSPITAL ESTABLISHED —SPECIMEN CONVERTS.



‘What the leaves are to the forest,  
With light and air for food,  
Ere their sweet and tender juices  
Have been hardened into wood,—

“That to the world are children;  
Through them it feels the glow  
Of a brighter and sunnier climate,  
Than reaches the trunks below.”

LONGFELLOW.



THE greatest trial in missionary life is the inevitable separation of parents and children. The surroundings of heathen life are very pernicious and unfavourable to their moral growth, in spite of the utmost care that can be exercised by the parents. It is also necessary that children should be sent home to be educated. So in November, 1860, Mr. and Mrs. John sent their elder boy Griffith (Mei-foh) to England in charge of some friends. Although very young thus to be separated from his parents, the climate had produced such bad effects upon him during each

summer, that it was found necessary to do so. At the same time, David, their younger son, was very ill, and Mrs. John was ailing. After three months of anxiety, however, the little one rallied, and during the winter regained much of his strength.

In March, 1861, a third son was born, who was named Arthur Gwilym. His Chinese name, however, was Tien-fuh, *i.e.*, "Celestial Happiness."

In September, 1863, David was seriously ill with dysentery, and for days his parents expected to be called upon to yield him to the Lord. It was, however, a trial fraught with blessing, and his recovery, after medical aid seemed useless, was especially helpful to Mr. John, who, just bereaved of his colleague, had to struggle on alone in "the centre of the empire." Both the work among the four Chinese stations and the European community devolved upon him. It now became evident that the furlough to England, which would soon become due, could not be taken at the proper time. If a young man had been sent at once, some five years at least would have had to elapse before Mr. John could leave Hankow.

Mrs. John, at this time, presented her husband with a daughter, and he joyfully writes: "Of course I longed for a daughter, and the gift has set all the bells ringing in my heart. Now I am satisfied, my family is complete. I don't think a father can be happy *daughterless*."

In view of Mrs. John's continued weak health, and the danger to little David of remaining another hot season in Hankow, Mr. John resolved to send them home in the spring of 1864. During the winter, they had the great benefit of living in their new mission house. For two years and a half prior to this, they had to live in a native house, which was not only small and uncomfortable, but dangerous to health. As usual, Mr. John had thought of his work first, and the erection of the chapel was his chief concern. That

building had been opened for some time. Upon the completion of the house, he writes respecting his building operations: "I am heartily glad it is all over, and that we are comfortably situated. The chapel is rather small; 200 might find room in it. I get a congregation of about 150 every day, and the service is carried on for about three hours. I do trust that God will bless the few people who have been gathered from among the heathen into His church at this place. All that I long for now is to see a large outpouring of God's Spirit on the work here. Pray that this may be the case."

In 1864, Mrs. John visited England with her family, and was much strengthened by a year's sojourn in her native land. Meanwhile, her devoted husband was pushing forward the work outside Hankow.

It was necessary to have a reliable native Christian as assistant in his aggressive rural work, but among the "Elegant Talents" (B.A.'s.) in Mr. John's converts, there was not one so well adapted as Lo Hiang-Yung. He was about forty-two years old, and had few educational advantages. However, he was very persevering, could read well, and write a good letter. For many years he had been an ascetic, and, under a deep sense of sin and a fear of vengeance to come, had renounced the world and forsaken his wife and family. The opening of the Hankow mission was good news indeed to Lo. So eager was he to have all possible spiritual advantages, that he became a coolie, the lowest grade of servant, to Mr. John, at the low wages of fourteen shillings a month. He was most diligent in reading the Bible and speaking to the people, and often at midnight was heard pleading with God. Having reconciled his family to himself, Lo was taken in hand and trained as an evangelist by Mr. John. After several attempts and many failures, he succeeded in opening a station at Tsai-tien, a small place about twenty miles from Hankow. Many obstacles presented



themselves, but Lo's zeal, simplicity, and truthfulness, and the timely aid of Mr. John overcame them, and much fruit was gathered.

Lo, however, was not satisfied with one place, and, having Mr. John's permission, he swept the country round, preaching everywhere. One day he arrived at Hankow with half-a-dozen gods under his arms, and presented them to Mr. John, with the statement that some months before he had been told that there were a few men who felt an interest in Christianity at Kwan-yin Kian, a small place ten miles beyond Tsaitien. He visited the place at once, and a woman came out to him with a child in her arms, which seemed to be dying. The poor woman told Lo that she had consulted doctors and priests in vain, and she was feeling very sad.

Lo said, "Your idols are false, the priests only deceive you. I worship the Supreme Ruler. If you wish it I will pray to the true God for you and your child. I don't know whether it is His will that the child should recover; but I do know that if it please Him, it can be done and will be done in answer to prayer." Then Lo "prayed, believing that God would answer."

The next time he visited the place, the woman ran out to meet him, exclaiming that the child was quite well, and that the God of the Christians is the true God. Frequent visits were then paid; and Lo requested that those who did not believe in idols had better hand them over to him, which two families did. These were the trophies he presented to Mr. John; and since that time many Chinese have been converted at Kwan-yin Kian under Lo's faithful exhortations. Such is teacher Lo, a man of simple faith, but mighty in prayer and in knowledge of Scripture.

Mr. John has, by the wise providence of his Heavenly Father, been aided by another stalwart



PAU SEANG SANG,  
*Deacon and Preacher*  
*at Wuchang.*

LO-HIANG-YUNG,  
*Assistant Missionary.*

REV. G. JOHN.

SHEN-TSI-SING,  
*Preacher and Punlit*  
*of Rev. G. John.*

YU-KI-FANG,  
*Chapel-keeper, Hankow.*

Christian of greater mental calibre than Lo, and also possessed of considerable literary attainments. This was Shen Tsi-Sing, Mr. John's principal assistant and friend. He was born at Nanking, in 1825. At fifteen he was pronounced Master of the Literary Essay, and at twenty-three he won the much-coveted title of Sin-tsai (Elegant Talent). He was compelled for a time to serve the Taipings, but being unhappy, he determined to drown himself. While standing on the brink of the river, the thought of his aged and widowed mother caused him to hesitate. He returned to his quarters, and afterwards escaped; but his wife and family, save one daughter, soon perished in the wandering life thus forced upon them. At Shanghai he heard the Gospel, first with contempt, then with doubt; and in that state of mind he became a teacher of the Mandarin dialect to some missionaries. In his spare time he studied the Scriptures, and said of himself at that time, "My sins appeared to me as a mighty sea, and to endeavour to expiate them by means of any talents, virtue, or learning I might have, with a view of obtaining heaven, seemed as futile as to attempt to cross the dangerous main on a small plank, hoping that it would land me on a blissful shore beyond."

Such were Shen's feelings when he became Mr. John's teacher. He soon became a Christian, and was baptized; and seeing he was a steady, hard-working man, Mr. John arranged for Shen to accompany him wherever he went, as his native friend and assistant.

Soon after Mr. John settled at Hankow, Shen joined him to *work*, and right faithfully and sturdily he laboured for twenty-five years as a Christian evangelist, to the entire satisfaction of Mr. John. He led an exemplary Christian life, and had a strong and healthful influence on the Church at Hankow until his death in 1887.

The work Shen accomplished was prodigious. Daily he spent the morning in Mr. John's study, writing books, tracts, or letters, for which Mr. John furnished the matter, and reading or expounding important native or foreign books. The afternoon he spent in the chapel, preaching, talking, or debating as the need of the moment required. He had notices posted on the chapel door, and also in various parts of Hankow, informing the people that from six to nine p.m., he would be in his vestry to converse with any on Christian subjects. He also took part in the Sunday services, and visited the out-stations to instruct inquirers and strengthen the hands of the evangelists. He was a good preacher, powerful in refuting the arguments of the learned heathen; and to Mr. John was indeed a friend beloved, and a most valuable helper. Such were the two principal men in that noble company of native missionaries who so long and so ably helped Mr. John in the Hankow mission. One has passed to his reward, the other remains to carry on the work.

While active in superintending the affairs of the mission, and in vigorous itineration around Hankow, Mr. John felt much the absence of his family, and the need of sympathy and help from a European colleague. The oppressive heat of the summer in 1865 accentuated his feeling of isolation, and it is not surprising that he did not approve of the suggestion of friends in England, that Mrs. John should prolong her visit another year.

It was indeed a joyful duty to go down to Shanghai in November to welcome his wife and youngest child. The lengthy change had wrought wonders in both, and with a thankful heart he returned to his work at Hankow.

An additional source of pleasure was the arrival in February, 1866, of the Rev. Evan Bryant, who had been appointed to the mission, and who entered heartily into the work necessary to prepare himself

for efficient service. With Mr. John, additional help always means more work, not ease-seeking but increased opportunities to do good. He had from the commencement of the station, in 1861, cherished the wish to make it a model centre for missionary purposes. No large mission station is now considered complete without some provision being made for the medical wants of the population in which it works. In many places professional men render help gratuitously to the poorer classes so far as their time permits, and where this aid is lacking, the missionaries have usually endeavoured to obtain some medical and surgical knowledge. A mission hospital or dispensary is, however, an expensive, although a most valuable, adjunct to a station, as it involves the erection and maintenance of suitable premises, a doctor and staff of assistants, and the gratuitous distribution of medicine.

Remembering that the Master had often utilised the curing of the body as an opportunity to effect the enlightenment of the soul, Mr. John had purposed the erection, at some distant time, of a place from which medical and surgical aid might be rendered to both converts and heathen. In this matter, however, God's providence outstripped His servant's most sanguine expectations, and unexpectedly led to their accomplishment in the following way. He had long desired to see a chapel in the garden attached to the missionaries' houses, in which the Gospel might be preached daily to the natives who resided at that end of the town, and to which the servants employed by foreigners in the European settlement might be invited to attend on Sundays.

About April, 1866, he mentioned this to Mr. Robert Maxwell and several other mercantile friends, with the view of obtaining some pecuniary help from the community. They encouraged him in the project, and promised to help. But when the matter was brought before the Europeans, it was found that a much larger sum

might be obtained if a Hospital or even a Dispensary could be added to the Preaching Hall. This fact was communicated to Mr. John, and he replied that the idea was in perfect harmony with one of his most cherished projects. The accomplishment of both plans would indeed be a matter for rejoicing; but it could not be carried out just then, as there was no doctor on the spot in connection with the London Missionary Society. He was then told that Dr. Reid would gladly undertake the duties in the medical department. The next day Mr. John had an interview with Dr. Reid, and found that he also had wished for something of the kind, and had been studying the Chinese language for several months, partly with the intention of making himself useful to the people in this way. A plan for working the Hospital was subsequently arranged, and the Directors of the London Missionary Society gladly approved and contributed towards the scheme.

When it became known that a Hospital would also be added, the matter was warmly taken up, and within three days the small European community subscribed £300 towards the buildings. Other amounts followed. The building was erected, furniture and medicines procured, and the balance of £85 in the treasurer's hands was sufficient to meet the expenses for the first six months. To Mr. John the results of this three months' additional work were highly encouraging, especially as the Europeans took such an interest in the Institution as to lead him to expect a continuance of their liberal support. He wrote home, "I greatly rejoice that the Hankow Mission is now complete in every branch. We have our Chapels, Schoolrooms, and Hospital, and all situated in excellent positions. With the blessing of God in connection with these means we may expect a greater spiritual change in this part of China."

Scarce was the Hospital completed, when from the



Yang-tsi branch of the river a flood poured forth, which gave both the town and surrounding country the appearance of a lake. Great destruction of goods and property ensued. Thousands of Chinese houses were deserted by their occupants, after they had clung to them as long as possible. The Chinaman, however, is patient and good-humoured. His house may be ready to tumble down, while he and his family, and perhaps a friend or two, are sitting upon the piled-up furniture or upon the roof, in a state of half-nudity, laughing, punning, gambling, smoking, sipping tea, and merry-making as if nothing strange had happened. In Europe such a calamity would elicit a wail of distress, newspaper appeals, and a general outburst of kindly sympathy and help. In Hankow it created but a slight sensation. The population seemed to think that it would do its work and go, leaving them much in the condition they were before. In two years all trace of it would be gone. Meanwhile the Chinaman has his bowl of rice and pipe of tobacco, and with these and a tolerable appetite he cares not for life or death. As to his mud and straw huts, he will run them up faster than the flood pulled them down. He will soon again earn one or two hundred cash a day, and gradually pay back the small debt which he will incur by the flood. Why should he be disheartened or feel crushed under Heaven's decree? Fate is sure; floods must come; and with his practical logic, unerring so far as earthly things are concerned, he calmly and without a murmur submits to the inevitable.

The attention of Mr. John and his dear wife were diverted from the flood to their little daughter Mary, who lay in a very critical state. Mr. John gave up hope of her recovery. However, after three months of very gradual improvement, she was able to go about, and then gained strength rapidly. Anxiety and joy are seldom far apart, and on November the

1st the capacious heart of Mr. John was gladdened by the arrival of another son, who gave promise of becoming healthy and strong.

In January, 1867, another colleague, the Rev. Thomas Bryson, arrived. While he was for the convenience of the Mission stationed at Wuchang, he assisted at all the other places according to the requirements of the work. The European community at this time made a very useful present to Mr. John in the shape of a convenient and comfortable mission boat. Hitherto he had visited the other stations in hired native boats, which were seldom waterproof.

A Dispensary was next opened at Wuchang, which Mr. John and Dr. Reid visited every Wednesday. It proved very successful, and often more cases required aid than could be attended to.

The indefatigable Lo established a station at Han-Yang, the expenses of which the native Christians at Hankow resolved to defray. One day a mandarin insulted him whilst preaching, and tried hard to entrap him into a quarrel, but failed. Then he told Lo that he was a rebel, and that he must accompany him to the superior mandarin. Lo consented, and went; but soon the mandarin let him go, with the advice not to preach again, to which he replied, "No, I must preach," and returned to the station and preached several days in succession, in order to show the people that the mandarin's statement that he was a rebel was false. Upon the third day the mandarin returned and apologised to Lo for his rudeness. The courage and success of the Evangelist greatly pleased both the missionaries and the native Church, the members of which worked with great diligence during the year 1867.

Mr. John reported an increase of fifty-one members to the Church, and many more in preparation. In 1862 ten adults were baptized; in 1863, twelve; in

1864, thirteen; in 1865, eleven; and in 1866, twenty-two. It is interesting to note that among the fifty-one members, thirteen of them were women, and that eleven of that number were wives of converts. The missionaries were unable to reach the women in a direct way, and for six years Mr. John had striven to impress on the converts the duty of bringing their wives under the direct influence of the Gospel. For a long time it seemed hopeless to induce them to feel and act as Christians, and he was tempted to despair. They would maintain that the custom of the country was contrary to it, and that the feelings of their wives, which they themselves could not but respect, were against it. To attend chapel, and join with men in public worship, would bring not only the wife but the whole family into contempt. They would for the present teach their wives at home. By-and-by the national sentiment would change, and then it would be easy and safe for them to make an open profession and attend public worship.

In 1866 a movement in this direction was discerned by Mr. John, and here in these eleven wives of converts were the first fruits of his five years of effort. He indulged in the hope that within a year or two the wives, and perhaps other female relatives, of all the converts in and *near* Hankow would be brought into the Church. Not a few of these new converts were the result of the influence of private members. Jeu-ki-pu, a carpenter, had brought in seven. He had been an active member for five years, and, although a poor man, he often supplied his workmen with rice to keep them from working on Sunday. Until this success followed his efforts, his relations and friends fancied that a species of madness had taken possession of him. They said he would do nothing but read his New Testament, and pray and talk to people about their souls and Jesus the Saviour.

An interesting case of conversion was that of a



THE LESSON—INTERIOR OF A CHINESE PAGODA.

young lower-grade mandarin, who entered the chapel with his secretary and some friends. Mr. John, seeing they were learned men, directed his remarks towards them, and was pleased with their wrapt attention. On the following Monday he was surprised by the mandarin entering his study as a candidate for baptism. He was a native of Si-chuen, and had seen much of the Roman Catholics there. Upon a friend inviting him to hear Mr. John, he replied that it would be useless to go, as the Catholics did not allow outsiders to enter. Upon being assured that it was different with the "foreign teaching" at Hankow, and reading one of Mr. John's tracts which was given to him, he went with his friend. He was well supplied with books, and soon mastered their contents, evincing the deepest interest in Christianity. He soon returned to his official duties in Si-chuen, with the earnest prayers of the Church for his success in disseminating his newly-adopted faith.

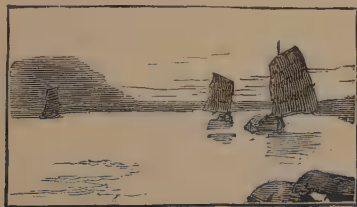
At the same time there was admitted as a member a doctor from the Si-chuen province. He, like most native practitioners, kept roving over the country, carrying with him his family recipes and specifics. When in Si-chuen a copy of the New Testament came into his possession. He was told by the Roman Catholics that it was a dangerous book, and that he ought not to read it. He doubted this advice, however, and could not see why they pronounced a book dangerous which contained the fundamental doctrines of their own creed. Upon his arrival at Hankow he thought he would attend the services to see whether his difficulties could be solved and his doubts removed. Mr. John will not readily forget his first encounter with this man. On entering the chapel he found him and Yu-ki-fang in a hot discussion, the doctor propounding his doubts, and old Yu wondering how any sensible man could have any doubts on truths so evident. Seeing that they were not likely



to come to an understanding, Mr. John stood up and asked him what he came to chapel for; whether to cavil or to seek the truth. He assured Mr. John that his sole object was to have his doubts removed and his convictions settled. "Then," said Mr. John, "you may put any questions you please, feeling assured that anything you may say will give no offence."

He showed at once that he had thought a great deal on the subject. "You say that Christ's birth was miraculous, but is a miracle possible? Was it necessary? If there was a necessity, why should it be necessary solely in His case? Granting the possibility and the necessity of it, what evidence have you that Christ's birth was really miraculous, and that the story is not a legend deserving no more credence than many similar ones." These are specimens of his questions, from which it might be supposed that he had consulted some deistical books. Though he seemed satisfied with Mr. John's replies, nothing further was expected. But on the following Sunday he reappeared; and shortly afterwards came forward as a candidate for baptism, stating that it was the discussion in the chapel that removed his doubts, and convinced him of the truth of the Christian religion.

These are specimens of the fifty-one converts added to the mission that year, and it may be easily surmised that such men as Christians would become earnest evangelists wherever their business led them.







## CHAPTER VI.

### TOUR OF 3,000 MILES THROUGH THE PROVINCES OF SI-CHUEN AND SHEN-SI—REMOVAL TO WUCHANG —VISIT TO ENGLAND—RETURN, AND DEATH OF MRS. JOHN.



“ O desert rocks, if one small leaf  
Can make these wastes look fair,  
What will ye be when these scorched plains  
*Earth's richest buds shall bear.*  
When Eastern suns shall cease to scorch,  
And storms no more destroy,  
And these lone valleys shall give forth  
Their streams and flowers and joy.”

DR. BONAR.



THE great event of the year 1868 was the missionary journey of Mr. John and the late Mr. Wylie, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to Chung-tu, the capital of Si-chuen, and their return through the province of Shen-si, a distance of about 3,000 miles. This journey will ever be memorable in the history of Protestant Missions in China, as the pioneer journey throughout that vast region in which the Han and Yang-tsi take their rise. Never before in the East had the Gospel been so widely published by the voice of a missionary.

It is much to be regretted that no account has yet been furnished of this tour by either of the travellers,

as, upon his return, Mr. John found such important and absorbing work awaiting him, that he could not find the needful time to transcribe from his journal the mass of interesting details to which the proclamation of the Gospel for the first time in hundreds of cities and towns had given rise. These provinces had been hitherto declared to be impassable to Europeans, and Mr. T. T. Cooper, who, as a merchant, attempted to pass through on his way to India, had been obliged to return to Shanghai. But the missionaries were not suspected of any political purpose, and were allowed to proceed.

From the first the native church at Hankow evinced the keenest interest in the proposed undertaking, and in its avowed object of proclaiming the Gospel to the millions of benighted ones in "the regions beyond." The night before Mr. John and his friend Mr. Wylie left for the West, they were entertained at a feast given in their honour by the Chinese Christians of the London Mission Church.

Let us imagine the scene ! The guests are in the place of honour surrounded by their loving native friends. On the tables are a number of basins piled up with fish, pork, beef, mutton, vermicelli, and stews of different kinds ; and for the after-courses there are ground-nuts, water-melons, seeds, cheese-cakes, biscuits, etc. Then every one is supplied with a pair of chop-sticks and a tiny saucer of soy—which is a sauce for fish made from the seeds of a plant, the *Soja hispida*,—and in the saucer a large China spoon is placed. A very little cup, not much larger than the bowl of a tobacco-pipe, is placed beside each person. At the commencement of dinner all of these cups are filled with red wine poured out of a teapot, as the Chinese always drink their wine warm. Then they are supplied with bowls of rice, and go to work with the chop-sticks, picking up the meat which is mixed with it as well as they are able. Towards the

close of the feast, tea is served round. Then, after thanks have been given to God, mutual expressions of regard and salutations are exchanged, and the guests and their friends separate.

On April 1st, the day of departure, many of the native Christians met at their pastor's house, and accompanied him to the vessel. Never from that day until his return, five months after, did they forget to make prayer and supplication on his behalf and that of the people to whom he was ministering. The spirit of missionary zeal spread from heart to heart, and a more sustained and fervent interest was felt by many in the welfare of the church. Twenty-two persons were added thereto during those five months.

The progress of the missionaries up the great River Yang-tsi was very slow, owing to the rapid current. The half-naked boatmen, from early morning till late at night, toiled at the bamboo cord by which the vessel was towed. In some parts of the river the water was dangerous, and often would overcome the efforts of the men, and spin the vessel round as in a whirlpool. Occasionally additional men had to be hired, and as many as fifty or sixty were required to pull the boat through a rapid. Sometimes the rope broke in the middle of a rapid, and the boat would go down stream at a tremendous pace, in a few minutes losing as much ground as it had taken hours to ascend. A kind Hand, however, was controlling all things, and the missionaries were saved from the rocks and other obstructions.

It is worthy of note that the boatmen would not attempt the ascent of a dangerous rapid without paying their devotions to Wang-yay, the guardian deity of the river, and making offerings. This Wang-yay is said to have been a child at a remote period. His grandmother being ill, the mother killed her boy to make soup for his ailing relative, and after partaking of this extraordinary dish, the old lady recovered.

The province of Si-chuen is justly celebrated in the other parts of the Empire for the many wonderful things it contains. Not only does it possess fine rivers, fertile valleys and plains, and magnificent mountain scenery, but its products are noteworthy. Thus, in the eastern parts of China, when one observes and inquires about anything excellent or curious, the reply to his inquiry usually is, "Oh, it comes from Si-chuen."

In various parts of the Yang-tsi there are numerous sand-banks in which gold is found; and in the winter months thousands of poor people make their living by washing the gold out of the sand. The land which the river waters is more valuable than the gold. The travellers passed fields with a great variety of vegetables, and rice in abundance. The latter is the staple article of diet among the poor of China. At the time of the missionaries' journey, the cotton plants were just appearing above the ground. Cotton is the substance from which all garments are made for those who cannot afford to wear silk clothing.

Another extensive crop was that of tobacco; and as there is hardly a Chinaman to be found who does not smoke, the quantity raised to meet the demand is enormous. Alas, that the smoking is not confined to tobacco! Large fields of poppies were passed—the flowers being very pretty to the eye, and the feelings which arise from smoking the opium are doubtless most fascinating; but like other temptations of this world, while remarkably pleasant, they bring certain ruin and death to all who persistently indulge in them.

Among the trees of this region, the most remarkable are the tallow trees, and others which are coated entirely with wax, and just look as if they were covered with snow in mid-winter. All the candles in China are made from these trees; for as Buddhism forbids the destruction of animals, the people cannot

conscientiously use the fat of dead ones to make candles with.

The hills of this region are full of coal, and numberless pits are to be seen in the face of the cliff along the river banks. In one place they found several thousands of wells, varying from 200 to 3,000 feet in depth, from which brine is drawn and boiled down into cakes of salt. They were informed that a short distance from the river there were oil and fire wells. The mineral gas issues from the mouth of the pit, and is conveyed in pipes to any distance. Many other things might be mentioned, but enough has been said to prove that these provinces of Si-chuen and Shen-si comprise a region remarkable for its beauty and wealth.

It requires a residence of many years in that antique country, and among that slow and easy-going people, to be able to bear the irritation of such a journey with something like patience and resignation. The fact that the numerous delays and stoppages gave the ever-ready missionary opportunities of delivering his Gospel message was a comfort, while the country through which they passed, being all new to them, excited their curiosity. The various interesting scenes and events that passed under their notice in the 721 miles from Hankow to Chung-Kiang-fu made endurable the two months taken to accomplish that distance. Mr. John found many converts to Roman Catholicism in this province of Si-chuen. At Chung-Kiang, the commercial capital of the province, they numbered between 3,000 and 4,000 persons.

From Chung-Kiang they proceeded up the river, and on June the 20th arrived at Loo-chow, a large city, where they remained three days selling Bibles. They found, however, that the boatmen would not proceed, as the 24th was the Dragon-boat Festival and a general holiday throughout Si-chuen. This fête is in memory of Keu-Yuen, who was prime minister

in the kingdom of Tzoo 2,000 years ago, when China consisted of several small kingdoms. This man was a relative of the King, and the object of jealousy to the court on account of his upright conduct. The other ministers laid plots, and by false representations procured his banishment from court. Being disgusted with this treatment in return for his fidelity, Keu-Yuen poured out his sorrows in a poem, which literary men still delight to study. He then threw himself into the river, but was observed by a fisherman, who reported it, and everywhere the inhabitants dredged for his body, which was never found. The search was continued for some years in honour of his character, until about two centuries later one of the emperors decreed that it should take place on one day all over the empire. So that although Keu-Yuen has not been deified, or had anything beyond his ancestral chapel, this memorial of the Dragon festival remains to his memory.

The morning was very quiet and hot, as the missionaries strolled through the town. Few people were to be seen, and they were dressed in anticipation of the fête. About three o'clock the river banks were lined with thousands of people, and hundreds of boats plied with passengers to see the race; while the grandees of the town in their barges proceeded up and down, making a terrible din with their gongs and drums to preserve order. One of these barges was sent to preserve the foreigners from annoyance.

At the appointed time the umpires took their seats at the river side, and some half-dozen boats started. They were shaped like dragons, in honour of the dragon which controls the river, and were propelled by paddles like those which tradition says were used in the search for Keu-Yuen's body. There was the blue dragon, yellow dragon, white dragon, black dragon, golden dragon, and silver dragon, each manned by about thirty men. Two men stood in the



middle of the boat beating a gong, to which the paddlers kept excellent time. One dragon had a fire in its mouth, emitting much smoke. The race was across the river, from the left bank to the right, when a man landed from each boat and gathered a handful of herbage, which was carried back to the umpires at the starting point. There was a very close contest; and, after this trial of skill, the boats paddled about for the amusement of the people.

From Loo-chow they proceeded up the Yang-tsi and the river Min to Cheng-tu, a city with a million of inhabitants, and the political capital of Si-chuen; then crossed a mountainous country in sedan chairs, to Han Chung-fu, a large city 1,200 miles up the Han river, and proceeded by water down to Hankow. In this cross-country journey their lodgings were of the rudest description, and the strangest food was often served up. In thus accomplishing a long-cherished project, Mr. John more than realised his most sanguine expectations. He hardly expected to return alive, and wrote the day after his return: "My brightest hope was that God would permit me to see Cheng-tu, where I thought I could die in peace, knowing that my grave at that great and distant city would stimulate others to come and occupy it in the name of the Lord. While preaching the Gospel there I felt a thrill of the true missionary spirit, which I value more than many years of ordinary life. Oh, that it were with me an abiding sentiment, a ceaseless inspiration. There are two ways of looking at the work; the one is the prudential one, and the other is the enterprising, *doing-something* one, of which the Great Apostle of the Gentiles is our greatest type and representative. Most modern missionaries are satisfied with the former, I long for the latter. The Directors want me to return home; but I shall certainly not leave the mission so long as it indispensably needs my presence, whatever sacrifice the delay may entail. My heart is



THE GATE OF HAN CHUNG-FU, SHEN-SI PROVINCE, CHINA.

too full of the Hankow Mission and God's work in this region to admit of my doing that. I feel, in a way I have never felt before, that the valleys of the Yang-tsi and the Han have been taken possession of in the name of Christ, and that it is for me to live and die for the millions of precious souls that line these two magnificent streams."

It is a matter of great joy to Mr. John that Cheng-tu has now been occupied for some years by the missionaries of the China Inland Mission, and that Chung Kiang is also about to be occupied by the London Missionary Society.

Soon after Mr. John's return, Dr. Shearer arrived from England, to act as medical missionary to the Mission. Besides carrying on the Hospital, he established Dispensaries at Wuchang and Han Yang, giving a day every week to each of these places. This arrival also led to another change which had important bearings on the general working of the Mission. Mr. John, in vacating his house for the accommodation of Dr. Shearer, found himself in the position that either he must go to considerable expense in renting and refitting a native house in Hankow, which, besides being unhealthy, would have to be vacated at the end of a year, or he must remove to Wuchang, and by making a few alterations and additions to the mission premises there, at one-third of the yearly rent of a house in Hankow, render them capable of accommodating both a married and an unmarried missionary. There were many reasons beside health and expense to suggest the latter course.

For a long time Mr. John had been desirous of rendering his colleague, Mr. Bryson, the assistance he really needed, and to see a flourishing Church grow up in Wuchang. That fine city, though a large and important sphere of labour, was still a virgin field, where hardly a furrow had been turned. The only labourers were one inexperienced missionary and the

native pastor. It was desirable that before Mr. John left for England he should lend the weight of his experience to the thorough establishment and working of the mission there. All this had been considered and the necessary repairs and alterations made, when another invitation from the Directors to visit England reached Mr. John. To have complied with that request would have been to sacrifice all the prospective advantage to the work in Wuchang just indicated, and for which the preparations had been made. The visit was deferred, and Mr. John took up his residence in Wuchang. He, however, preached every Sunday morning at Hankow, and paid visits twice or thrice in the week to that place and Han Yang.

In extending operations at Wuchang, it was found desirable to have a Preaching Hall in one of the main business thoroughfares. The missionaries' efforts were thwarted by the undisguised opposition of the educated class of the inhabitants, who threatened any person who dared to render the foreigners the slightest assistance. Again the officials showed their ignorance of the man they had to deal with, and of the fact that "the word of the Lord cannot be bound." Once more the "silvern voice" was lifted in the open streets, and in every lane and thoroughfare the Gospel was proclaimed in the hearing of those who had neither time nor inclination to attend the chapel services.

In the midst of this arduous and successful enterprise, a letter from the Directors of the Society, intimating that it was desirable to relinquish the work at Wuchang, fell like a bombshell in the midst of the little band of devoted workers. Whilst doubtful as to the full meaning of this strange intimation, Mr. John wrote a letter in which the successes, advantages, and prospects of Wuchang were forcibly stated. A week later, however, came a more decided letter, with the resolution passed, ordering the retreat

in a very definite manner, and directing that the mission premises should be sold.

Mr. John would not retreat; but wrote with unanswerable force that the land and buildings had been almost exclusively purchased with money that the European community at Hankow had intended as a present to himself; but feeling that he could not take it, he had begged that it be applied to Wuchang, in which he had then just succeeded in obtaining a footing. While apologising for touching on this personal ground, he intimated that Wuchang was very dear to him, and that to relinquish it would cost him a bitter pang. Mr. John refused to have anything to do with the carrying out of this resolution, not from a spirit of disobedience, but owing to a deep conviction that after having toiled between five and six years in this difficult place, he felt that to undo what had been accomplished, so far as outward appearances were concerned, could only be regarded by him as *sinful*.

These representations had the desired effect. Before the year closed, Mr. John received the sanction of the Directors for the continuance of the mission in Wuchang; also their approval of the remodelling of the premises as a place of residence, and a grant of £90 towards the erection of a Preaching Hall. These marks of approval were accompanied by an intimation that the Directors hoped to increase the number of European missionaries at Hankow within two or three years.

These cities were in the year 1869 visited by a flood which rose two feet above that of 1866. Mr. John and his family stayed in their house at Wuchang until the water was within three inches of the floor. As there was no upper storey, they accepted the kind invitation of an old friend at Hankow, and took up their abode in his house until the waters abated. One of the phenomena of this flood was the immense quantity of sprats found in the waters. The servants

at the mission premises often fished all night with nets in the compound with great success.

As one result of the flood, over a hundred thousand distressed and homeless people dwelt on the hills near Hankow, and were fed by the wealthier natives. One mandarin, a devout man, set a good example to his rapacious compeers, and behaved most humanely to his poor countrymen. This man, like many other good heathen, was a puzzle to Mr. John. Although virtuous, they did not seem to be the *nearest* to the kingdom of heaven. He could only account for it by supposing that their piety was grounded in self-righteousness, and says they were offended by being told to seek justification through faith in Jesus Christ.

While thus hindered in mission work, Mr. John had cause for rejoicing in the birth of a daughter, on the 20th of September, and a month later he moved back with his family to their little cottage at Wuchang. This was not only incommodious, but built so that they suffered much from the cold during the winter of 1869-70; while their discomfort was increased by the children suffering from small-pox. In spite of his distressing surroundings, however, Mr. John worked on vigorously, often preaching four times a day, and walking long distances.

He had now been hoping for several years to revisit England, but adverse circumstances prevented his doing so. This winter he was again disappointed, but with characteristic wisdom he sought to make the delay conducive to the interest of the work. An opportunity occurred to put into operation a long-cherished plan. He had for years desired to see the converts coming forward and offering their services as evangelists gratuitously, and now five did so in a very pleasing way. After the morning service, each of these men would go out to a village chosen by himself, and conduct a service. After a week or two Mr. John accompanied them in turn. He writes of



one : " He is the son of Christian parents, and I baptized him when a mere boy, nine years ago. It did my heart good to hear him preach to-day. His views are perfectly clear, his earnestness very marked, and his manner exceedingly agreeable and winning." At this service Mr. John met a half-enlightened heathen, and conversed with him on Jesus and His salvation. Soon afterwards he had the pleasure of hearing this man preaching to his heathen fellow-countrymen with remarkable clearness and power.

While at this village Mr. John had interesting conversation with other heathens. He bemoaned the darkness of their minds, and said they only sought for things on this side of the grave ; their hopes of the life beyond being to appear again on this earth in better circumstances than they were then placed in, while they dreaded reappearing as beasts or reptiles. The door of each house was covered with two large figures, called door-spirits, and charms ; and a looking-glass was hung above, in order to frighten the devil by a sight of himself.

On the 30th of September, 1870, Mr. John and his family arrived safely in London, having come by the French steamer *Imperatrice* to Marseilles. Although they were in poor health when leaving Shanghai, all were much improved by the voyage, and Mr. John felt still vigorous after his fifteen years of energetic missionary labour. His arrival in England was a source of pleasure not only to his relatives and friends, but to the Directors and supporters of the London Missionary Society. His eloquent appeals on behalf of China were most stimulating. Few who listened to those full sentences and his well-modulated delivery, suspected that the English language was not his mother tongue. But chiefest among the enthusiastic audiences which hung upon his lips, were his old friends and admirers in Wales. As a boy he had won their affections and chained their hearts ; now his

manly strength carried all with it, and Wales felt that a voice of her own was drawing forth her best and noblest feelings.

Mr. John at first resided at Machynlleth. Here dwelt his wife's parents, the venerable Rev. David Griffith and his wife, who had sailed for Madagascar just fifty years before, and had been expelled from that island in 1835 by the cruel Queen Ranavalona. Here also his most intimate fellow-student, the Rev. Josiah Jones, ministered to an important church. Thus the early months of his well-earned rest were congenially spent, with frequent excursions into England upon Deputation service. That year the Annual Association or Cymanfa of Wales was held at Machynlleth, and Mr. John preached an able missionary sermon in Welsh to an out-door audience of about 5,000 people. But he found it necessary during 1871 to remove to Swansea, to obtain educational advantages for his children.

In 1872, at the Directors' invitation, Mr. John preached the annual sermon at the Anniversary of the London Missionary Society, which was afterwards published under the title *Hope for China; or, Be not Weary in Well-doing*.

After rendering much service to the Society in England, Mr. John prepared to depart. He had been detained a year beyond the usual time allowed for furlough, through Mrs. John's precarious state of health. Both were now anxious to return, Mrs. John feeling that though she might have but a short time to live, it had better be spent in trying to teach the Chinese women, whom she loved so much, something of the love of Jesus.

At their meeting in January, 1873, the Directors took an affectionate farewell of their esteemed friend. Mr. John in addressing the Board, exonerated them from any blame that might be imputed to them by his leaving for China, stating that "they had said to

him, 'Mr. John, we could not think of asking you to go; but if you feel that duty prompts you, then all that we can do is to wish you God-speed.' He was doing all in harmony with Mrs. John's feelings, and had consulted the doctors as to her health. Mrs. John had more of the missionary zeal than he had."

On the 8th of February they embarked at Liverpool in the ss. *Hector*. It was a cold day, and Mrs. John never rallied from the effects of her exposure to the weather. Gradually her throat, mouth, and tongue blistered and swelled, so that even drinking became a painful task. The heat in the Red Sea was most trying; and when that ordeal was passed, her sufferings continued very severe. She bore all with wonderful patience. While prepared to depart, she hoped and believed to the last that she should see China and labour there a little longer.

The day before her death she told Mr. John that she would get better, but added, "I am in my Saviour's hands. I have placed myself there that He may do with me as He thinks best. Do you think He will accept me? I am very unworthy."

"Yes, my dear," her husband replied, "He has done that long since."

"Yes, He has," was her reply; and she talked about devoting herself to the mission work more heartily than ever.

Mr. John was with her most of the night. Soon after he retired he was called to her; but the gentle spirit had fled just as the early rise of the glorious Eastern sun lighted the vessel's way into the harbour of Singapore.

"Up and away, like the dew of the morning,  
Soaring from earth to its home in the sun;  
So let me steal away, gently and lovingly,  
Only remembered by what I have done.

"Not *myself*, but the *truth* that in life I have spoken,  
Not *myself*, but the *seed* that in life I have sown,  
Shall pass on to ages, all about *me* forgotten,  
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have done."

She was buried in the European Cemetery at Singapore, and it was a comfort to her sorrowing husband to be able to lay her precious remains in that beautiful resting-place.

Mr. John arrived at Hankow in a very distressed condition. The converts there were kind and sympathetic. English people cannot conceive of the intense love and reverence which these poor people entertain for Mr. John. Now their hearts ran over. At the Sunday communion service, before partaking of the elements, several spoke, but all broke down when mentioning the name of their "Teacher-mother," and the whole congregation was bathed in tears.

Mr. John plunged into his work again, although at times his feelings of loneliness and sorrow were intense. The progress made in all parts of the mission was most pleasing to him. Some to whom he had addressed parting exhortations on leaving had decided for Christ, and passed triumphant to the great reward. Good old Yu-ki-fang had been carried to his rest by loving hearts, who would not allow a heathen coolie to touch his revered remains. Others held on their way steadfastly.

While thus engaged in reviewing and making further advances, Mr. John's heart was cheered by a beautiful letter from his daughter Mary—"all my own," the little matron said. It runs, "I am very sorry for you, dear papa; I wish I was near you that I might comfort you. I must make haste and learn, and come out to you, and keep your house. Dear mamma is quite happy, she has no pain. Jesus is comforting you, and grandma and brothers and myself. He is giving us work to do. He won't let us stop still and feel sad, but he stirs us up like He did Abraham."

The native Christians of Hankow had for years carried on by themselves open-air preaching at night. Mr. John attended one of these services in July,

1873; and while standing there, in the midst of a large crowd of listeners, the duty of opening the chapels for night services forced itself upon his conscience. At the church-meeting he spoke to the converts on the subject, and asked for volunteers. The appeal met with a prompt and hearty response; and night after night, seven or eight of their best men were to be seen proclaiming the Gospel. Though feeble at first, they rapidly developed into admirable preachers. They had begun in the hospital chapel; but feeling the scope for usefulness there to be limited, they wished to have the large city chapel which is in the centre of the town.

The converts of the other Missionary Societies, hearing of the proceedings of the London Mission people, applied to their missionaries for permission to carry on a similar work. The congregations were often very large, and consisted mostly of men who could not or would not attend in the daytime. The whole of the churches were stimulated by this effort, and a very favourable impression was produced upon the heathen. The preachers were able to tell those who called the Christian religion the "rice-eating religion," that the charge was a libel; and that so far from depending on the church for their sustenance, they were giving their services gratuitously, and that the very oil and candles which lighted the chapels were paid for by themselves. The heathen soon began to see this, and acquired a more exalted view of the Christian Church.

The Church now numbered over 200 members, and monthly additions were made; but this is by no means a statement of the results of the work done. As Hankow is purely a business mart, very many of those who were converted and baptized returned home, often to distant provinces, and the numbers of the parent Church were no index of the actual work successfully accomplished. Some of the missionaries

deplored this feature; and doubtless it would have been more pleasant, and to some perhaps safer, to have been kept under the guidance of the missionaries. But Mr. John persisted in regarding it as an advantage, and these distant brethren as fore-runners of the evangelists who would soon follow them up. Thus from "the centre of the Empire" ran light and life to every province.

During the winter of 1873-4 a new and commodious hospital was erected at Hankow, principally by subscriptions from foreigners and natives, at a cost of £1,350. Dr. Reid, who had taken up the work again on Dr. Shearer's retirement in 1870, carried it on vigorously until the arrival of Dr. Mackenzie in June, 1875. Much spiritual good was also effected, as all the missionaries devoted part of the day to labour among the patients.







## CHAPTER VII.

### LITERARY WORK.

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“No age  
Can outgrow truth, or can afford to part  
With the tried wisdom of the past, with words  
That centuries have sifted, and on which  
Ages have set their seal, and handed down  
From venerable lips of solemn men,  
Who learned their wisdom in a graver school,  
And in an age of keener, sorer conflict  
Than we have known in this gay holiday,  
When truth and error are but things of taste,  
Changelings of fashion, altering year by year.  
Guard, then, those ancient wells, those living springs  
Of which our fathers drank and were refreshed.”

DR. BONAR.

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As a writer in the English language Mr. John has a style in which terseness and lucidity are aptly combined. His productions have shown him to be one who does not write for personal distinction. Mission work, and the ways and means of its development, has been his theme. While bearing directly on this point, and treated with great frankness and insight, these productions give readers the impression that they are side efforts, used as auxiliaries to his great life work.

In 1859 he wrote a valuable paper on “The Ethics

of the Chinese, with special reference to the Doctrines of Human Nature and Sin." This brochure shows considerable acquaintance with the writings of the Chinese moralists, and defines their position in the development of their philosophy.

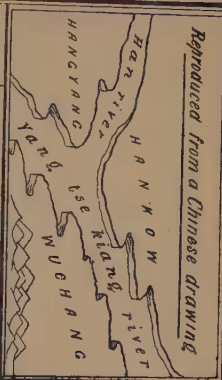
His sermon, preached at the Anniversary of the London Missionary Society in 1872, is a masterly plea, the aim of which is to inspire "Hope for China," respecting her attitude towards the kingdom of Christ upon earth. It was afterwards extensively circulated as a pamphlet under that title. Seeing that the zeal of many for missions was flagging, he wrote, before leaving England in 1882, *A Plea for China*; also, *China, her Claims and Call*. At the same time appeared a most valuable booklet, entitled *Spiritual Power for Missionary Work*. This is a powerful and effective statement respecting the work and power of the Holy Spirit, and is, doubtless, one result of Mr. John's experience of the inutility of mission work without Divine aid, as well as the fact that the results of spiritual efforts are abiding only so far as they are originated and sustained by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is chiefly through his literary efforts that Mr. John's name has become so well known in the Celestial Empire. In no country in the world are there so great inducements to the missionary to use the press as a means of making known the truth as in China. The written language is the same for the whole of the Empire; and the same book is intelligible, not only to all Chinese readers, no matter what dialect they speak, but also to the educated amongst the surrounding nations. The number of readers amongst the people is very large. Every hamlet and village has its school; the towns have many; and the cities have colleges in addition. Everywhere education is held in the highest estimation. What the proportion of readers actually is will probably remain an un-

settled question, as it varies widely in different districts; but when the immense population of 400 millions is borne in mind, it is not too much to claim that a Chinese book can be understood by more millions of mankind than a book in any other language. The people have a great reverence for literature; they carefully examine all the works that come into their hands; and, although they may not agree with them, they seldom destroy or abuse them. The books in general use were written a long time ago; new works are almost unknown amongst the people at large, and consequently such are eagerly welcomed by them. Another important matter is that paper and printing are both so cheap that the press may be extensively used without involving an extravagant expenditure.

While there are these encouragements, there is also a serious drawback in the difficulty of the Chinese language. In this respect it is unique; there is no other language or literature which can be compared to it, and the labours of a lifetime are required for its mastery. Chinese is written with curious-looking characters, familiar to most people, if only from seeing them on tea boxes. They are not the symbols of sounds, like ours, but of ideas; the sounds, or names of them, change with every variation of dialect; but the ideas they represent never alter. They correspond to our figures 1, 2, 3, etc., which mean the same thing to any European who sees them, although in each language they are known by different names. As the Chinese have a different character for every idea they possess, it is as if the whole language was written with figures; and thus it becomes possible for people who speak different dialects to readily understand the same book, though they cannot exchange a single idea by speech; just as an Englishman, a Frenchman, a German, and a Russian would immediately understand what was

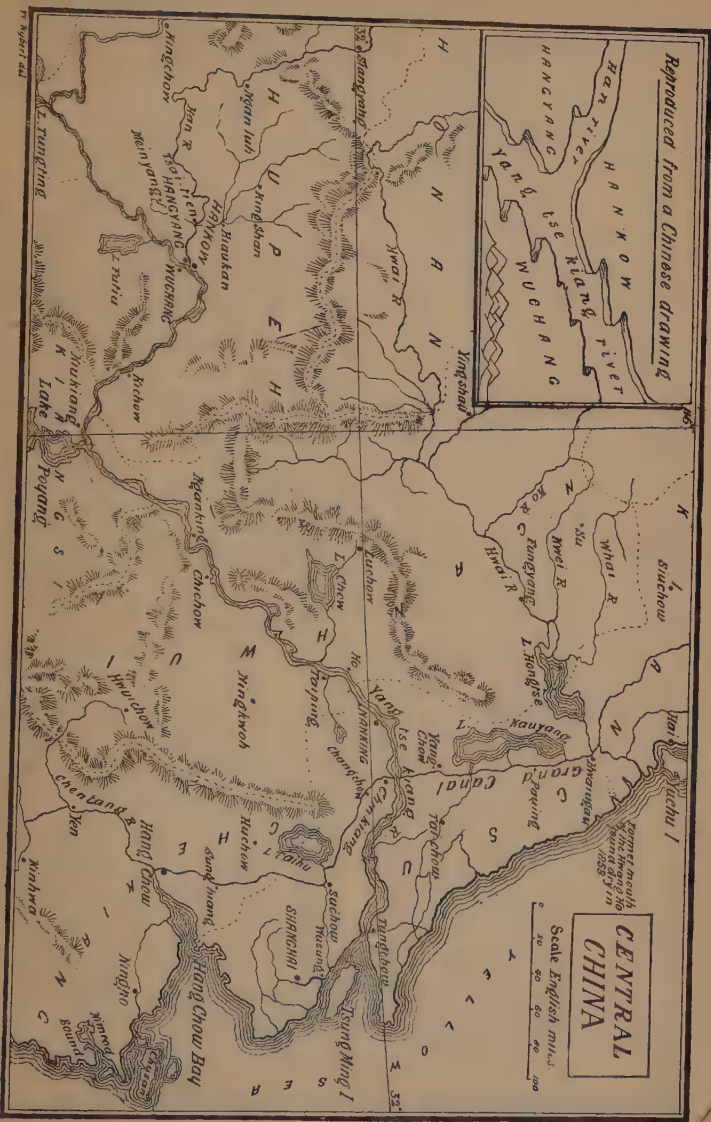
*Reproduced from a Chinese drawing*



**CENTRAL  
CHINA**

Scale English miles  
0 20 40 60 80 100

Former mouth  
of the Hongkong  
harbour  
1858



meant by 250 if they saw the figures, but neither could comprehend what the other called them. It would be quite possible to read Chinese books in English without knowing a word of any Chinese tongue, by simply learning the meanings of the characters and the method of their arrangement. It would, however, be no light task, as the dictionaries contain about 40,000 different characters, although only about 6,000 of these are in constant use.

The Chinese call their written language *Wen-li*, or "literary style," while foreigners often call it "classical style." This form does not correspond with any spoken dialect. In other countries the language as written is the same as the spoken, and any one hearing a book read out aloud would understand it quite as well as if he had the book in his hand and saw the page for himself. *Wen-li*, however, is addressed to the eye entirely, and not to the ear, so the Chinese reader must see the book, or he will fail to follow what is being read, unless previously familiar with it. This is due to the fact that although they have a most liberal supply of characters, the allowance of names for them, to correspond, is exceedingly limited. In Mandarin, the most prevalent dialect, there are only 411 sounds, from which it follows that each sound must stand for a great variety of characters—some of them hundreds—all with different meanings. It is difficult for us to imagine how a language can be spoken which has only 411 sounds, or words, in it; and curiously enough the Chinese have a similar difficulty with English: they cannot understand how a language can be written which has only 26 characters. They suppose it must be a poverty-stricken tongue indeed, and often ask the missionary to teach them English, because they could learn it at a sitting—"only 26 characters!"

The difficulty is surmounted in either case by the

same means; we put several letters, or characters, together to form words; while they, in speaking, combine their sound, by using two or more characters in speech where only one is required in writing. For example, *fu* is a father, but it is also a wife, an axe, happiness, a labourer, a charm, and a great many other things besides. As written, one character contains the whole meaning for each, as they are all distinct; but in speaking, another must be added to prevent confusion. Hence father becomes *fu-tsin* (father, relation); wife, *fu-jin* (wife, person); axe, *fu-tan* (axe-head); happiness, *fu-chi* (happy atmosphere); and so on through a great many *fus*. By keeping in mind this distinction between written (*Wen-li*) and spoken Chinese, it is easy to see that what is quite plain to a reader may be perfectly unintelligible to a hearer.

Spoken Chinese can be written or printed just as readily as *Wen-li*, as there are characters for all the sounds used in most dialects; but the Chinese themselves are not in the habit of writing it, except on the rare occasions when they designedly intend to reproduce speech, as in novels or plays. The bulk of their literature, their correspondence, and newspapers are all in *Wen-li*. The redundant characters add nothing to the sense as addressed to the eye, so they carefully exclude them under the impression that the chief beauty of a "literary style" consists in being as concise as possible. Missionaries, however, find that books in the various spoken dialects are of the greatest value; people who can read a little understand them better, and they may be read out aloud for the benefit of those who cannot read at all; hence they have provided an extensive literature in this which is called the "colloquial style." Such books, unlike those in *Wen-li*, are available for use only in the districts where the colloquial is used in which they are written. The most of them are in Mandarin, a dialect understood by three-fourths of the Chinese people.



In his literary work Mr. John has strictly confined himself to the preparation of such books and tracts as have a direct bearing on the evangelisation of China; although, to sinologues (those versed in Chinese literature), the temptation to stray into other branches is exceptionally strong. There is still in the native literature, in its historical and philosophical works, a great deal which, if translated and put within the reach of foreign scholars, would be gladly welcomed; and, as a result, bring much credit to him who makes it accessible. On the other hand, amongst the native literati, there is a rapidly increasing number of those who are exceedingly anxious to acquaint themselves with the sciences and arts of the West, and who would be loud in the praises of any one who would provide them with works on these subjects in their own language. Although to labour for the spread of knowledge in East or West is a high calling, and those who devote their energies to either of these important objects are worthy of all honour; yet Mr. John has consecrated his talents to something higher still, by keeping to the single purpose of making the Gospel known to the Chinese. It may not be so much appreciated by the world; but just as eternity is greater than time, and the wisdom of God higher than the learning of men, so far does the one purpose surpass the other.

His first tracts were issued in 1860, after he had been five years in the mission field; since which time he has constantly added to their number. The Catalogue of the Central China Tract Society contains upwards of thirty books and tracts from his pen. Many of them have been adopted by other Tract Societies, and every year over half a million of his publications are circulated throughout China. Their titles show their character. Amongst them there is, "The Gate of Virtue and Wisdom," "Teaching the Family in the Right Way," "The Guide to Heaven,"

"The Great Themes of the Gospel," "The True Saviour of the World," "The True Way of Seeking Happiness," "The Truth concerning God," "On Regeneration," "On the Resurrection," "On the Atonement," "On Repentance," etc.; these require no further explanation. He has carefully considered the needs of all classes; some are specially adapted for the literati, and have been extensively distributed amongst them at the public triennial examinations in the capitals of many provinces; others are suitable for wide circulation amongst the people at large; while for the instruction of converts, and for use in public worship, he has provided popular catechisms and hymn books. They are all in the *Wen-li* style, and have been found of great value, not only throughout the empire, but also in Corea and Japan. The following extracts from the Central China Tract Society's Report illustrate their usefulness:—

"Most of the good effected by such a Society as this will never be known by us in this present life, and yet there is abundant reason to thank God and take courage. We are told, by one who has been very actively engaged in helping on the Society's work, that he has received many interesting letters from persons in distant provinces, seeking more light respecting the doctrines promulgated in our publications. Moreover, he states that while on a country trip in Hupeh, in the course of preaching to a large crowd of heathen, he found that one of his hearers was tolerably conversant with many points of Christian doctrine, and this man, after having correctly answered a series of questions put to him by the preacher, volunteered the statement that his information had been gained by reading a three-cash tract which he had purchased in Hankow. At length, however, a question was asked which fairly baffled the student of the small tract; but this was replied to by another man in the crowd, a scholar, who subsequently proved by his answers

that he had gained a much larger acquaintance with the truths we teach than the former. On being asked whence he had gathered his information, he said that it was from reading a tract, a large one, mentioning the name of another of the Society's publications, and further stated that the same tract had been read by all the scholars of his district. 'But do you believe what the book teaches?' asked the missionary. 'With a few exceptions, Yes; and on the whole we think it exceedingly good,' was the reply.

"Facts such as these, of themselves, bear ample testimony to the value of the work done, and they bring to us an incentive to press on, even more earnestly, along the same lines. But there are two cases of interest which have come to our knowledge which, if taken together with the facts already mentioned, should lead to a fuller recognition of the claims of this most important branch of Christian effort.

"On the banks of the Fu Ho, a tributary of the Han River, there is a little market-town named Liang Ho K'eu, at which missionaries, journeying to and from the Prefectural city of Teh Ngan, thirty miles distant, have often called for the purpose of preaching the Gospel and distributing religious books and tracts. One of these, a tract, found its way into the basket of a wastepaper collector, and was being carried away to be consigned to the fire, when a shop-keeper belonging to the place caught sight of it, rescued it from destruction, took it home, and read it. This man already possessed a Testament, which he had purchased some time before, but, finding that he could make nothing of it, had laid it aside. The reading of the tract, however, which happened to be the 'Gate of Wisdom,' threw an entirely new light on the Word of God, until then a sealed volume to him, and by the blessing of God, the man was aroused to religious concern and enquiry. On visiting Hankow, he made his way to the Mission Chapel, became more and more deeply

interested in the way of salvation, and, at length, after receiving instruction both in Hankow and Teh Ngan, was received into the Christian Church in the latter city.

“A native colporteur in Hankow was, owing to some building operations, compelled to move his stall to another locality, and finally took up his position outside the house of a merchant. At first he was treated by the proprietor of the house with considerable rudeness and contempt; but the ‘soft answer,’ at length, ‘turned away wrath,’ and the merchant became so far pacified as not only to cease his persecution of the old man, but even to purchase some of his books. After a few weeks, the colporteur was surprised to receive an invitation from the merchant to enter his house, and drink tea. The conversation turned upon the subjects of the books, which it seems the merchant had been carefully studying, and before long the old man was engaged in earnestly pressing home the Gospel upon his former persecutor. This first conversation led to others of a similar nature, and an invitation to attend the Sunday services at the Mission Chapel was accepted. The newly-awakened inquirer had not been in attendance at the chapel for many weeks, before he, one day, to the amazement of his neighbours, brought out all his family idols into the street, and there subjected them to the test of fire, a test which, needless to say, speedily resulted in their destruction. At the end of two months, the merchant, learning that it was usual for members of the Church to subscribe regularly towards the expenses of worship, etc., signified his intention of becoming a subscriber to the extent of half-a-dollar a month, and added, ‘As I have been attending services for two months I already owe a dollar, which I shall be glad to pay.’ Soon after this he was received into the Church, where his bright face and earnest demeanour are a constant source of inspiration to his missionary brethren.”

Mr. John's mastery of Chinese was so conspicuously exhibited in his tracts, that he was encouraged to attempt a fresh translation of the Scriptures in a similar style. Upwards of thirty years—a very long period in the history of Chinese missions—had passed away since the *Wen-li* version then in use had been issued. Its translators were men of great ability; but in the early days it was not possible for them to have the same exact acquaintance with the capabilities of the language as their successors, who had the full benefit of their labours, better opportunities for study, and all that a longer experience could attain to. When the difficulties under which they laboured are considered, the wonder is, not that their translation should be found faulty, but that its excellence was so high as to serve for so long a time. The chief objection to it was that they had aimed at the highest possible classical style, and by the use of appropriate, but unusual characters, and a remarkably terse construction which this necessitated, they had made the Bible unintelligible save to the best scholars. So deeply was this felt to be the case, that missionaries had almost entirely given up using it in favour of local colloquial versions, notwithstanding that the natives object to them, and cannot be persuaded to regard them as "literature." Hence the demand arose for a *Wen-li* version in a simpler style, one which, while satisfying the native literary taste—and in a conservative country like China it is needless folly to run in the teeth of this—would also be easily intelligible, and perfectly accurate.

At the request of the National Bible Society of Scotland, Mr. John undertook the task of meeting this demand in 1883. The amount of work it involved was stupendous; but through unremitting labour, he has completed the whole of the New Testament and part of the Old; besides having the former carefully revised, in which work he was heartily aided by some of

the ablest and oldest missionaries. It was issued portion by portion, the New Testament being finished in 1886, which won for itself unanimous approval. It circulates everywhere; from the great wall down to Annam, from the borders of Burmah out to the Yellow Sea. The scholar admires it, while the farmer and the artisan find no difficulty in understanding it. There are more copies of it demanded than of all other Chinese versions put together; already about three quarters of a million of portions and Testaments are in the hands of the people, the annual issues being about 230,000. The estimation in which it is held in China, may be judged by the following extract from a review of it which appeared in the *North China Daily News*, of May 13th, 1887:—

“We are led to believe that the permanent Standard Chinese Version must steer a middle course between the extremes of the high classical and low colloquial styles. It must carry with it an air of authority and intelligibility; and must call forth the respect, and be suited to the capacity, of the average scholar. It must neither involve too much labour on the part of the foreign missionary or the Chinese convert to master the exact idiom or meaning. It must not contain the colloquial of any district, but must be in the easy classical, or current style, known all over the Empire; and which native newspapers have of late years done much to cultivate and improve. It must not contain note or comment, which might thus prove vantage ground for the introduction of pet theories or favourite dogmas. It must be an original translation made direct from the originals, and not the translation of a translation. But time will not permit us to say all that we think the standard translation ought to be; suffice it to say that we consider Mr. John's recent translation of the New Testament, in its amended form, to be a most praiseworthy effort in the right direction, *and coming very near to the mark*



*in all its necessary or essential particulars.* Although still capable, perhaps, of further improvement, it is yet evidently quite equal to the present needs of evangelistic work in all parts of China. There can be little doubt but that this version will prove acceptable to the great body of missionaries; although, of course, we may be very sure there will be many of the more fastidious who will stick to their crotchets and refuse to use it, preferring their own translation however inferior, or that of their co-religionists. It is to be hoped that the Rev. Mr. John will have health and strength to complete the whole Bible in the same way as he has done the New Testament, and live to see it make the impression on the religion and literature of the nation which he so fervently desires, and which is all the reward he seeks for his herculean labours."

It would be easy to multiply such extracts; but, as they are all of the same tenor, one more, the most recent one, from the *New York Missionary Review of the World*, will perhaps be sufficient:—

"The New Version of the New Testament prepared by the Rev. Griffith John, of Hankow, is said to be superior to any other; and it is confidently expected that it will be adopted as a basis of a union version for all China. Such a book will be in a language understood by three hundred millions of the people. Unlike India, China has really but one language; and if once the Bible were satisfactorily translated into that language, the result may be something such as the world has never before witnessed. The book has worked wonders before; it will doubtless work wonders again."

The above is no vain expectation. Already through the wide circulation of the Word of God and other Christian books, the millions of China are being leavened. Far and near the people are becoming familiar with Christian truth, while the name of Jesus is as widely known as that of *Fu* (Buddha). There

can be no question which will prevail ; sooner or later, the latter will pass away, and Jesus alone reign in China. How much even one man may be enabled to do towards bringing about this happy result, is seen in the case of Mr. John ; the number of Scriptures or tracts which bear his name as translator or author issued every year is already close on a million, and will soon exceed it. Who can estimate their influence ?

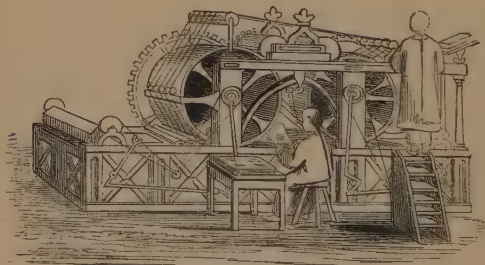
The change will come, and those who know the people best are most hopeful of its speedy advent. In that day, he, and all others who have toiled to hasten it, will have their reward ; a reward compared with which the praise of men, or the approbation of learned Societies will sink into utter insignificance.

Although in his literary work Mr. John has hitherto used the *Wen-li* style—generally called easy *Wen-li*, in contradistinction to the high classical, which is anything but easy—he is equally a master of the Mandarin colloquial, or court dialect ; and so satisfied are the British Bible Societies of his unequalled abilities as translator that they recently unitedly requested him to prepare a version of the Scriptures in that style. Constantly too he is urged by missionaries in all parts of China to furnish commentaries, handbooks, and works of every description for which they feel the pressing need. There is no mission-field in the world so vast as that of China, and this department of effort is one of the most important in it. In Mr. John it has been favoured with a highly efficient and indefatigable worker, and the earnest prayer of all who are acquainted with what he has already accomplished is, that he may be long spared to still further advance the cause of Christ amongst the black-haired race by tongue and pen. Although there are few who are privileged to do so much in a lifetime as he has already overtaken, and although all he has done has been done well, it is but little compared with what

in China awaits the doing; so while we earnestly hope that he may be enabled to persevere for long years to come, we also pray that through his example and the knowledge of China's great need, many may be influenced to follow in his footsteps, and devote their lives to this most noble enterprise.

“Stronger than steel  
Is the sword of the Spirit,  
Swifter than arrows  
The light of the truth is,  
Greater than anger  
Is love, and subdueth.”

LONGFELLOW.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### SECOND MARRIAGE—STONED BY THE HEATHEN— ENDUED WITH "POWER FROM ON HIGH"—CON- TINUED SUCCESSES—DEATH OF MRS. JOHN.



"For souls, that carry on a bless'd exchange  
Of joys that meet within their heavenly range,  
And with a fearless confidence make known  
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,  
Daily derive increasing light and force  
From such communion in the present course;  
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,  
Meet their opposers with united strength,  
And, one in heart, in interest and design,  
Gird up each other to the race divine."



THE value of the services and help which a missionary's wife can render to her husband, as well as by direct effort upon the people, is nowhere greater than in China. After being blessed for eighteen years with such support, Mr. John severely felt its withdrawal. The work which he loved better than life greatly needed it, and he well knew that onerous duties awaited the lady whom he should again ask to be his wife. When, therefore, in October, 1874, he married the widow of the Rev. Dr. Jenkins, of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, he brought an addition

to the mission at Hankow which cannot be adequately estimated. A few words, however, will suffice to show that this lady was exceptionally suitable for the position.

Mrs. John was endowed with a combination of gifts and graces quite exceptional. Tall and graceful in figure, her finely-cut features were expressive of a rare blending of intelligence, firmness, and sweetness. She was strong, and capable of accomplishing much work without fatigue. She seemed to possess the practical nature of Martha with the contemplativeness and spiritual insight of Mary. Her frank and affectionate disposition was an attraction to all with whom she came in contact; while her faithful performance of all promises, and other duties of friendship, bound all hearts to her. She had also a power of calling out the best qualities of those she knew, and could bear with people's peculiarities to any extent as long as she was sure that they were true in their love and friendship, and would stick to them tenaciously though they might have unpleasant traits in their character. This social feature was of great advantage to her in dealing both with sailors and Chinese women.

Mrs. Jenkins had been amongst the earliest to welcome Mr. John in 1855; and in 1873, when bereaved and sorrow-stricken he called upon her and other friends at Shanghai, it was her spiritual conversation which cheered him, and sent him on to work vigorously at Hankow. After Dr. Jenkins' death, in 1871, she visited America, and was greatly blessed by intercourse with the Christian friends of her earlier days. She experienced deep searching of heart; and old longings for the *perfect* life in Christ were revived with such force that the Heavenly Dove descended upon her as a spirit of sanctity and power.

Thus baptized anew, Mrs. Jenkins returned to

China, asking God to provide a suitable place for her to work in. One day, as she was going to Union Chapel, Shanghai, she met about half-a-dozen sailors, each carrying a bottle of whiskey or old Tom under his arm. A special interest in sailors sprang up in her heart at that moment, and she asked herself, "Is not this the work that God has given me to do?" She spoke to them, and passers-by were surprised to see those sturdy sons of the ocean fling their bottles into the ditch at their side, and accompany the lady to chapel. After service they went to tea at her house; and upon that evening was commenced those Sunday Evening services for sailors, which earned for her world-wide love and respect as "the sailor's friend."

From forty to eighty sailors and others would assemble in her drawing-room, and for several years these services were the most fruitful and interesting held in Shanghai. They were admirably conducted. Short fervent prayers, earnest addresses, and bright singing, made them attractive; while her faith for conversions led her to be most direct in her teaching and appeals. The change produced in the general conduct of the men-of-war's men and other sailors was astonishing. At the other Chinese ports, and in Japan, a similar interest sprang up in the sailor, and her prayer for a work to do was fully answered.

It is not surprising that the sailor felt both love and respect in return for the ardent interest taken in his welfare by this attractive lady, and appreciated her efforts to keep him from temptation. Neither is it a matter for wonder that when he was brought from darkness into light and life, he should continue to look to her for guidance and help.

"Dearest mother," writes one of these dear fellows to her, "is there anything wrong in smoking? There is a young chap on board the *Frolic* who told me last night, when he saw me smoking, that I had not given



up all for Jesus, so I thought I would ask you if you think it is wrong, and I will give it up. I will do nothing that my Saviour does not love; and any-



MRS. GRIFFITH JOHN.

*(The Sailors' Friend.)*

thing you do not like, I will not do. I would not displease you if I knew it; you who have promised to be my mother. You do not know how I love you as a mother, more now than when I was with you. You

were kinder to me than anyone else has ever been. If I had not known you, I should not have known Jesus."

This is the way in which the sailors used to write to their spiritual teacher, and it proves that she had completely won the hearts of these honest, blunt, and simple-minded men.

It will readily be admitted that such a worker was an acceptable comrade to the missionaries stationed at Hankow. There her efforts were directed more to the Chinese women and girls, although her love to the sailor remained the same to the end of life. Whenever a gunboat or tea-ship visited the port she was indefatigable in ministering to the spiritual needs of the men.

Her spiritual aid and sympathy were most refreshing to her husband, and he worked more vigorously than ever in each branch of the mission. When Mrs. John arrived at Hankow there had been no English lady at the Station for nearly two years, and the consequence was that the number of female converts had not increased in anything like the same proportion as the converts from among the Chinese men. Mrs. John's advent was the beginning of better things. She set to work to learn the Hankow dialect, which is different from that of Shanghai, and soon was engaged in house-to-house visitation, with a Biblewoman, in superintending a girls' school, and especially in devoting herself to the instruction of the female patients in the Hospital. Day by day, through rain and sunshine, she was to be seen on her way to that Institution. Once, as she was passing the doctor's house in a broiling sun, he remarked to a colleague, "Well, that is something I have never seen in India. Mrs. John's devotion to these poor women is something wonderful." She knew how dark and sad their souls were, and felt she must go and give them light and comfort. Her labours in that

direction were not in vain. Some of the most satisfactory female converts were brought to Christ through her efforts in the Hospital.

Mrs. John often accompanied her husband to the villages around Hankow. She had a particular liking for old women; and it was delightful to see how she would take a wrinkled, withered old hag by the hand, tell her how much she loved her, and then try and convey to her dark mind the fact that there was One in heaven who loved her still more. "Come, Griffith," she would often say, "and tell this poor woman something about Jesus and His love."

During the cold season of 1875-6 Dr. Mackenzie accompanied Mr. John upon seven journeys into the adjacent country. They sought to combine the preaching of the Gospel with the healing of the sick; and in these journeys nearly all the neighbouring villages were visited, many for the first time.

In the new year, when the Hospital was necessarily closed, these two brethren took longer journeys into the Pottery district of Hiau-kan, about forty miles from Hankow. Here they had a rougher experience than any Mr. John had before experienced. God mercifully draws a veil over many of the perils to which His servants are daily exposed in speaking to the people. At Hiau-kan, however, they were furiously assailed by a heathen mob, and missiles of all sorts were hurled at them. The missionaries were struck repeatedly with heavy clods and stones. For about five minutes it appeared as if Mr. John were about to die. The Christian converts, who accompanied them from Hankow, bravely stood in front of their pastor and doctor, and as far as possible shielded them from the blows. Some of these poor fellows were terribly beaten. If any further proof were required as to the sincerity of their Christian conduct, it was now conclusively rendered. In their blood they witnessed for Christ.

Mr. John says, "I never felt more calm in my life than I did in that storm, the prospect of death did not disturb my peace in the least. I felt thankful that I had been permitted to shed my blood in the cause of Christ. I had laboured many years in China, but never before had I been called to lose a drop of blood for Him. The thought brought real sweetness to my soul."

Thus, amid the pain and conflict, God gave His people peace; and what would, under circumstances other than the preaching of the Gospel, have been a disaster, was by His power turned into a season of consolation and grace.

Mr. John visited the district soon after, and found all quiet. He preached freely everywhere, and was cordially received. In some of the villages platforms were erected by the people for him to preach on, and hundreds came from far and near to hear what he had to say about those things for which the Christians were ready to endure such suffering. The brutal assault and the forbearance shown, not only gave advertisement to the "religion of Jesus," but caused a reaction of human sympathy to be created in the otherwise indifferent heathen heart. A good work was begun there, and bright prospects gave Mr. John much hope and gladness. Not the least among his triumphs has been the opening of a chapel among these very people who sought to take his life.

During the tea season of 1875, Mr. and Mrs. John opened their house nightly to the sailors from the ships, and many interesting meetings were held. Mrs. John had charge of the musical part of the service, and also spoke very effectually. Ten cases of decided conversion occurred, and both were much cheered at the other good resulting from their efforts.

Mr. John writes, "It is a sad thing to go from ship to ship, and from sailor to sailor, and to have no other reply than 'No,' to the questions—'Are there

any Christians on board? Are you a Christian?' Such is the state of things on board these ships, although they come from Christian England."

Many of the sailors were doubtless glad to have a Christian home to visit during their evenings in port, where good singing, lively music, and attractive conversation were to be found. Here also was a flower-garden which was the pride of Hankow. On her arrival Mrs. John had found a wilderness in front of the Mission House, and being fond of flowers she spent an hour or two each day, upon her return from the city, working in this ground. A great change soon took place. Beautiful plants, flowering shrubs, and flowers of all procurable kinds were planted. Writing at this time her husband says, "It is the prettiest garden in Hankow. The sight of it these mornings, bathed in dew, whose every drop outvies Golconda's gems, is most lovely. There is a dahlia in front of our door with seventy large red flowers on it."

Increasing success attended the work in the chapels. Over 120 were baptized in 1876, more than double the increase of any previous year; and in 1877 many sought admittance. During the first two months 26 were baptized.

For a long time previously Mr. John had been profoundly dissatisfied with himself, and felt also that the Mission ought to advance with greater strides. He writes, "My own soul is going out in strong desires towards God. Read Ephesians iii. 16—20, and you will see what I am praying for—'filled with all the fulness of God.' I long to be filled with divine knowledge, divine wisdom, divine love, divine holiness, to the utmost extent of my capacity. I want to feel that 'all the currents of my soul are interfused in one channel deep and wide, and all flowing towards the heart of Christ.' I hardly begin to know what treasures there are for us in Christ. It seems to me that every one of us might be more spiritual, and ought

to be unspeakably mightier than we are. It is the Holy Ghost in us that is everything; and the Father is willing to bestow Him upon the weakest, if he will but ask in the spirit of implicit faith and entire self-surrender. My cry these days is for a Pentecost, first on myself and my missionary brethren, then on the native Church, and then on the heathen at large. Without this we can do nothing. How I long for it as I am now writing. Your God has been revealing Himself to me of late in a way for which I praise His name. Large drops of blessing have descended into my soul. But I am waiting the melting of the great clouds into rich summer showers."

The long-looked-for blessing came, and in such abundance and power as to leave no doubt as to its Divine origin. Mr. John lay all day on his face before God, wrestling in prayer and waiting to be endued with power. The next day he went forth to preach, but without a text. God opened his lips; and while speaking, a veritable baptism of the Holy Ghost fell on him and the converts. They were filled with joy, and on all sides those who believed rose up to bear testimony to the love of God; whilst many who had been babes in Christ Jesus became men, and spoke with boldness of Christ to the unconverted Chinese. Some of the vilest characters were changed, and went throughout the country; and soon strangers from afar flocked in, as they said, to *hear* the Gospel, for they had already *seen* it in the lives of the converts.

Thus the good work spread amazingly, and Mr. John's own testimony is that it is since the time he received "power from on high," as a special gift from God, that real and large success has come to him as a missionary. It cannot be doubted that the good wrought in former years was divinely effected. It stands the test, and some of its subjects are now glorified saints; but his statement must be received as that of one who feels that he is taught by the Spirit of Christ.



Early in May, 1878, Mr. John executed a commission for a kindred Society which was peculiarly pleasant to his pioneering tendencies. The Established Church of Scotland sent out a mission to be located at I-Chang, a city nearly 400 miles up the river. The Directors of the London Missionary Society requested Mr. John to render every assistance in his power. He accompanied the young brethren to their station, and remained there until they were comfortably settled down. Everything went on satisfactorily, and he returned to Hankow feeling thus his most sanguine expectations had been realized.

Rumours of war were rife in China during the year 1880; and although Russia was the immediate object of attention, there was a widespread opinion among the natives that victory over that country would mean persecution to the Christians. This feeling interfered with the progress of the work in the Hankow mission, inquirers were intimidated, and accessions to the Church were fewer. Still fifty-eight adults and twenty-nine children were baptized, and there were unmistakable signs of development.

In the district of Hiau-kan the converts wished to build a chapel, but were told that the Society could not provide one for them. Mr. John, however, promised that if they would furnish ground, and contribute to the building according to their means, he would try and get help at Hankow.

Two pieces of land were provided at once, and the Native Church at Hankow was charmed with the idea. Some gave well, the poorest gave something, and the missionaries subscribed. The consequence was that two little sanctuaries, with a prophet's room attached to each, were built, much of the labour also being given gratuitously by the converts.

This matter of building entirely by the converts was a unique thing at that time, as the Chinese are essentially a money-loving people, and their hearts

must indeed have been touched to do this. Mr. John could hardly believe his eyes when he saw them bringing their strings of cash, so great did the transformation which they had undergone appear to him. The missionaries of other Societies doubted the reality of the matter, and one brother very naturally remarked that it was one thing for a Chinaman to promise and another thing to give. The promises indeed were made in good faith, and nearly the whole sum was paid in to the deacon. Here, then, the power of the Gospel is shown, in that the same people who four years ago as heathens stoned the missionaries, were now esteeming it a privilege to build a chapel for the religion of Jesus.

Mr. John was greatly cheered by the opening of a purely Chinese hospital in Hankow by one of the converts named Wang Kien-tang, who had been trained by Drs. Reid, Shearer, and Mackenzie. Both the ground and building were subscribed for by native officials, merchants, and converts. This hospital was made self-supporting by the fees paid by the patients; and Dr. Wang gave his services gratuitously, depending upon his practice outside the hospital for his income. The best thing about the institution was that Dr. Wang told the subscribers that he was a Christian, and that he could only undertake the medical duties on condition of being allowed to carry on his work as a Christian. This was acceded to; and on September 27th, 1879, the hospital was opened with a Christian service, and preaching has since then been carried on there daily.

This year Mr. John and Mr. Archibald, of the National Bible Society of Scotland, made an extensive tour of over twelve hundred miles in the provinces of Hu-nan and Kiang-si. The capitals of these provinces had been persistently closed against all attempts of foreign missionaries to enter. On January 4th, 1880, these gentlemen were turned back from the gates of

the latter capital. In the afternoon of the same day they had a long interview with two of the magistrates, who did not seem at all inclined to admit them; but they managed to persuade them, and obtained permission to enter the next day. They did so, and walked about in every direction, saw all the sights, preached in the temple and streets, and sold as many books as they could spare. That the famous Nan-Chang, the capital of Kiang-si, was really opened on the occasion of their visit, was abundantly proved during the same year, when many missionaries, hearing of their success, visited it, and much evangelistic work was done within its walls.

Returning by way of Hu-nan, they attempted to enter Siang-tau, the largest mart in the province, but were driven away. They knocked at the gates of Chang-sha, the capital of Hu-nan, but found them closed. They had a most cordial interview with the magistrates at Chang-sha, and believed that if they could have admitted them they would have done so. They said plainly that they feared the people, and dared not admit missionaries. In other cities the missionaries found a great and effectual door opened, and returned to Hankow in the hope that ere long the people of Chang-sha will give up their pride and hostility, and thus the *last of the provincial capitals of China* will open her gates to the Gospel.

It must be mentioned that in this journey they visited the city of King-teh, a place of wider fame than Nan-chang or Chang-sha. This immense mart, one of the largest in the Empire, is famous over the world for its porcelain manufactories. Here no missionary work had ever been attempted, and Mr. John had grave doubts whether any foreigner would be admitted within the precincts of a place so jealously guarded. Their success, however, was complete. They landed without opposition, penetrated its narrow streets, visited its furnaces, and inspected

every department of its porcelain manufacture. They also preached to immense crowds, and sold thousands of books and tracts. Mr. John will never forget his congregation in the centre of the town, the largest he has addressed in China. The missionaries had found their way to an immense square in front of the Imperial Pottery. For a while the whole town seemed to be pouring its thousands into the square. Here they stood for hours, preaching with all their might, and both selling books as fast as they could hand them to the eager purchasers. A foreign face had never before been seen there; the curiosity was intense, and the excitement considerable. Having finished their work, they departed, feeling more than satisfied with the conduct of the magistrates, and deeply grateful to God for all He had enabled them to accomplish. They looked upon their success in these cities as God's doing, and gave Him all the praise.

In 1880 Mrs. John, accompanied by her sister, left Hankow for England. The reasons for her coming are succinctly set forth by Mr. John to his dear friend Mr. Jacob: "Mrs. John has been out in China twenty-six years, and the only change she has had for sixteen years has been one short six months some nine years since. The consequence is that her health has been running down for two or three years; and about four months since she had a severe sprain of the ankle, which has kept her in the house ever since, and given a decided impetus to the downward course of her health. It is a great trial to her; being so active, her daily life is generally crowded with work. There are few missionaries in China who work harder than she does, or who have as much to encourage them in their work.

"I don't feel that I should be justified in consulting my own happiness, and keep her over another summer. It will be a great trial to us both, but life is

made up of trials. If you say, 'Why not come home with her?' my reply is simple, 'My colleague's departure leaves the Mission entirely resting on me for the present. I cannot come.' "

While his friends pleaded in vain, an unanswerable demand for his return was made. Mrs. John, who had at first improved in health, went over to America. Here it was found that other symptoms were developing, and Mr. John was summoned by cablegram to New York. On arriving there, in March, 1881, he was much struck with her altered appearance, and distressed at the intense pain she had to endure. Early in April a successful operation was performed, which gave much relief to Mrs. John, and eventually she recovered sufficient strength to return to England.

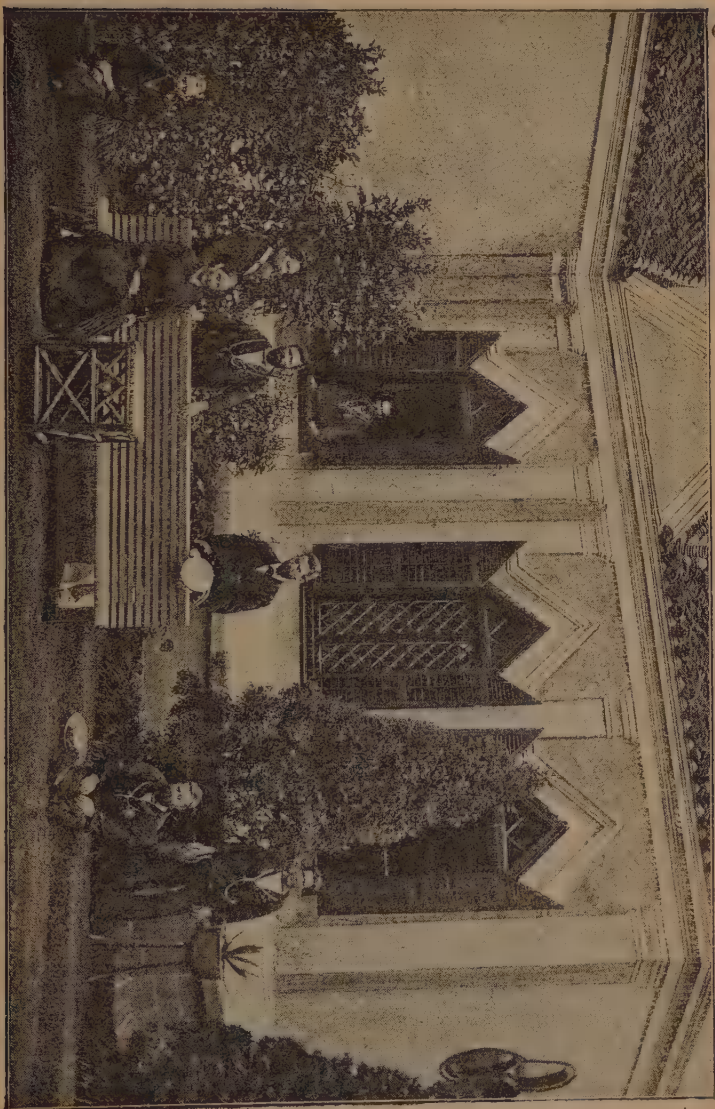
Mr. John was very kindly received at New York by the Rev. Dr. Bevan, who with other friends vied in rendering all the Christian help and sympathy possible during the great anxiety which he had to bear; while many Christian ladies gave similar aid to his suffering wife.

Mr. and Mrs. John returned to England in July, 1881, and spent the winter among their friends. He was again invited to advocate the claims of China; and at the autumnal meetings of the Congregational Union, and in many churches, he spoke with soul-stirring eloquence.

Both longed, however, to return to their loved toil, and left England on February 28th, 1882. Mrs. John's stay in China, however, was of very short duration, and a relapse compelled her to return to New York in July, 1882, for further surgical aid. This was successfully rendered; and again she essayed to take up her much-beloved work, arriving in Hankow in October, 1883.

When in England, Mrs. John had received various sums of money from friends to be devoted to a project long contemplated by her, viz., the building of a Sailors'





THE SAILORS REST, HANKOW.



Rest. This was erected in the south-east corner of Mr. John's garden, and as will be shown by the picture is a very pretty building. Here the good work was energetically pursued, and also meetings of the Europeans from the community were held. Many sailors were converted during the tea seasons, and the crews of several British gun-boats were greatly blessed by the services in this charming retreat.

Mr. John has always endeavoured to adapt his work to the peculiar ways of the people. One of the things a Chinaman looks forward to with the greatest joy is the prospect of passing from the old into the new year in the bosom of his family. For many days, towards the close of the year, thousands are seen leaving the cities in order to reach their native villages, and for fifteen days at least it is not orthodox to do any work. The time is spent in visiting friends, feasting, and amusements. In consequence of this Mr. John has chosen the New Year for visiting the country stations, as the men are at home, and can give their whole time to his teaching. His plan is to spend the day in preaching and talking to the heathen; and in the evening in praying with and expounding the Scriptures to the converts.

He left Hankow on the third day of the Chinese New Year, the 17th of February, 1885, accompanied by Dr. Gillison, the Rev. C. G. Sparham, a native assistant, and a deacon. About ten miles from Hankow they arrived at the river which runs up to Hiau-kan. The boats there were all gaily decked with flags, and the boatmen lounged about with no thoughts of work. But cash is an irresistible power in China, and some men were found who would move their boat, provided the contract price was worthy of the season. By travelling all night they landed for the Wei village early in the morning, and enjoyed the twelve miles walk across the country. The little chapel at Wei was visible long before they reached

the place. A good congregation was assembled; and day after day they preached to an audience which was continually coming and going, while Dr. Gillison attended to scores of sick people in the vestry.

Sunday was a great day: several were baptized, and about one hundred sat down to the Lord's table. Mr. John could not but think of his first attempt to enter this village with Dr. Mackenzie, and how they were ruthlessly assailed by the mob and driven back to Hankow. He also remembered his second visit, when, standing on the ground where the chapel is now built, he told the few converts then there, that he felt sure the spot on which they stood was to be the site of their first sanctuary in that region.

At the other villages, and at the city of Hiau-kan, the work was not progressing so favourably. At the Lin village the heathen people maintained an indifferent attitude, and stood aloof. Two of the Christians were ill: these they called upon and prayed with; then they separated. That night a messenger followed them to the city of Hiau-kan, and entreated them to return, as one of the Christians was dead, and the heathen party were up in arms as to the manner, time, and place of his burial.

In the morning Mr. John and Mr. Sparham returned, and endeavoured to show the heathen how unreasonable it was on their part to interfere with the Christians in these matters, and asked what they would think if the Christians took it upon them to dictate to the heathen party as to how they should bury their dead. They proposed that the body should be kept for 100 days, which was refused as unreasonable. They then proposed that the coffin should be placed on the ground, but not buried for 180 days. They then proposed to allow the old man to be buried if Mr. John would guarantee that no one should die at that village for 100 days. They were told that he was a *man*, and not God, and also that if they did not

allow the burial the matter would be brought before the magistrate.

Then an old man came forward and asked that another spot be chosen, as the ground fixed upon would interfere geomantically with a neighbour's grave. Mr. John said they did not believe in geomancy, and one spot was as good as another, and that personally he would meet their wishes if the relatives did not object. The widow's permission being obtained, a place near at hand was chosen, and the old Christian buried decently, in the presence of a large heathen crowd. Mr. John hoped that his conciliatory manner would draw the heathen towards the missionaries, and was glad to show that, while holding firmly to his convictions, he had no desire to treat their fears with contempt, however foolish they appeared to him. He was, therefore, specially glad to hear one say, as he departed, "That foreign teacher is a good man."

On their way back to Hankow they called at Tsai-tien, and found one of the Christians had been beaten by a mob, led by a Buddhist priest, because he would not contribute to a heathen festival. For years the Christians had been troubled in this district on the same score by the heathen, who now had taken courage by the Chinese successes in the French war, and were convinced that the day had arrived when the foreigner should be cast out and the religion of Jesus banished from the land. The matter was brought before the magistrate, who issued a very satisfactory proclamation, reminding the people of the Treaty rights of Christian converts, and ending with a solemn warning that if such deeds of violence were repeated the full penalty would be meted out to the offenders.

The phlegmatic nature of the Chinaman is such that he seldom manifests excited feelings over any topic. But in the beginning of October, 1885, a pleasing event occurred which broke in upon the

habitual calm, and called forth an exhibition of enthusiasm on the part of the Hankow converts such as is rarely witnessed in China. The event referred to was the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the arrival in China of the Rev. Griffith John, and the feelings it called forth on the part of the native brethren were somewhat surprising to all the missionaries.

On that day some three hundred persons assembled in the Hospital Chapel—which the converts had decorated very tastefully in Chinese style, and of which the accompanying illustration will give some idea—to present to Mr. John a set of three handsome tablets, on which are recorded the esteem and affection in which he is held by his Chinese brethren. The central and important tablet contains four large gilt characters on a green silk ground, which mean to the initiated that Mr. John is regarded as “the benefactor of the Eastern regions.”

Although the handsome tablets on the wall, which are visible in the picture, and the fine decorations of many-coloured hangings, which were beautiful both for correctness of taste and for richness of effect, spoke of many loving hearts and hands, the best part of the proceedings commenced when the converts rose one after another, in quick succession, to testify to God's goodness in bringing their beloved pastor into their midst, and in preserving him for so many years in health and strength to labour at Hankow. A graceful tribute was also paid by Mr. Archibald, of the National Bible Society of Scotland, to the good old man, Mr. Shen, who for twenty-eight years had faithfully assisted Mr. John.

After Mr. John had made a reply, in which he mentioned how his early love for Madagascar had been overruled by God, who also opened a way for him to China; several adults and children were baptized, and some two hundred and fifty Christians joined in a communion service. How different from

this scene was that of the two or three newly-awakened Christians, timidly joining with Mr. John in his native house, twenty-four years before, to perform the same act of love and service. Then having lovingly remembered those friends who had long joined the Church triumphant, the first Thanksgiving Service held in Central China ended.

At this time their principal place of worship in Hankow, called the Kia Kiai Chapel, was rebuilt. It was the old chapel which had been the first built in Central China. For more than twenty years the Gospel was preached in it for hours every day, and there are men in every province of the vast Empire who learned something of the truth there. In it were sown seeds which have resulted in many other chapels being built in Hankow and the surrounding country. Mr. John prayed, "May the glory of this second temple be greater than that of the first." We believe it will be so.

Thus ever-widening success attended the Hankow Mission, and gladdened the heart of Mr. John. In the midst of it, however, and before the year 1885 closed, he experienced a heavy loss in the departure of his beloved wife to her eternal reward.

Mrs. John's death was a harmonious supplement to her life. For about three months she had felt poorly; but neither her husband nor herself had any apprehensions of danger until Christmas Day in 1885, when she had several severe chills, and in the afternoon intense pain, followed by what Dr. Gillison pronounced to be peritonitic symptoms. All the help which love and medical skill could render was afforded to the patient, but she gradually grew worse. Her husband and friends hoped to the last; but two hours before the time of her departure a great change came over her, and their hearts began to sink. During those two hours she gave expression to her faith and hope in the clearest manner. She seemed to recognise the



THE HOSPITAL CHAPEL, DECORATED FOR MR. JOHN'S THANKSGIVING SERVICE.





Presence of the King in His beauty, and the veil was removed from heaven as that redeemed one waded the river. It was a triumphant passage. Through weakness her words could not be uttered distinctly, but they were wonderful words—constantly repeated—such as “Jesus! Precious! Jesus, Saviour! Come, Lord Jesus! Bliss! Griffith! Don’t fret, Griffith!”

Her husband asked if she was happy. In an instant a strange light shone *upon* or *from* her face; she opened her eyes, and fixing them on heaven, said, “Jesus, the Lord! Beautiful!” During the last half hour this was frequently repeated, and she heaved her last sigh with the words upon her lips.

Those present can never forget what they saw and heard during that half hour. They felt heaven was in their midst, and that they were near the King. What was that light? Was it not the reflection of another Face which was just then smiling upon her? The spirit fled; but a responsive smile remained, so beautiful that those who gazed upon it found it difficult to believe that the soul—stimulated by that vision—was not still behind, lighting it up.

“A soul still upward bent  
On higher flight,  
With wing of light;  
That shall be thine!  
All well with thee;  
Oh, would that it were mine!”

The devoted husband, faithful to what he conceived would have been her expressed wishes, carried her remains down the Yang-tsi in the ss. *Kiang Kwan*, and laid them in the beautiful cemetery at Shanghai. His daughter, who has ever been a comfort and help, accompanied him on this sorrowful journey. Never were the views of the “Celestial Kingdom” more impressive to these mourning ones as they floated through the beautiful gorges, past the Silver and Golden Islands, to the spot *she* loved most in the East.



## CHAPTER IX.

FAINT, YET PURSUING—THE ARMS OF CHINA WIDE  
OPEN TO THE GOSPEL—HAPPY DEATHS.



“So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still  
Will lead me on,  
O'er dale and hill, through stream and torrent, till  
The night is gone;  
And with the morn those angel faces smile  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.”



WEAKNESS and sorrow were the chief features of Mr. John's experience of life in 1886. One source of satisfaction and joy was afforded him in the completion and opening of a beautiful new chapel, with a large vestry or guest hall, native pastor's house, girls' school, and teachers' rooms. All these, together with a book-shop, were erected in several buildings upon one large piece of ground. Like the Sailors' Rest, they were the outcome of that pilgrimage of pain made by Mrs. John to New York and England in 1881, when Mr. John was so hurriedly summoned to her. Although their hearts begrudged the valuable time apparently taken from the Mission

in Hankow, that season of anxiety is now proved to have been fraught with blessings to that work. While Mr. John, accompanied by his wife, undertook many fatiguing journeys as a deputation from the Society when in England, the necessity for building a new chapel in the principal native street of Hankow was not forgotten. The few subscriptions gathered fell far short of the sum needed. At the very last moment, and when the enterprise seemed doomed to failure, a few friends in a farewell meeting quietly raised enough to complete the sum that had been mentioned. On account of the great rise in the price of land this sum proved insufficient; but other friends came forward, and the money required, about £1,000, was obtained.

On the morning of Sunday, the 27th of June, about 300 Christians assembled in the new chapel for the first time. It had never been their lot to worship God in such a place as that; and the arched and ornamental roof, the graceful pointed windows with their diamond-coloured panes, the prettily-carved platform, and the general appearance, which had been specially designed to please Chinese taste, produced a very gratifying effect on the converts. Some of them have since said that during those opening services God became to them higher, grander, and worthier of praise.

In the afternoon 450 Christians attended the service, when the Rev. David Hill, Chairman of the Wesleyan Hankow District Committee, preached from Gen. xxviii. 17: "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Other services followed, and the happiness of the people seemed to grow day by day as they became more familiar with their beautiful spiritual home. It will be well to give some details of this the largest and most beautiful Protestant church in Central China.

The passage to the mission ground from the street is through a high and imposing Chinese entrance, on the left side of which is a book-shop, where the chapel-keeper sells Bibles and tracts. Inside this entrance is a square paved courtyard, and right across is the chapel, the front view of which is shown in the accompanying picture. The double central window over the doorway has been dedicated to the memory of the friends at Westminster Chapel, who supplied such a large portion of the contributions. A similar coloured window at the back reminds the converts of the late Mrs. John, whose lot it was, like that of David, not to be permitted to see the completion of the house of God, for which she had so long prayed and worked. Another window is in memory of the late John Kemp Welch, Esq.; while the platform, which is quite a work of art, was the kind contribution of Dr. Thomas of Liverpool and his congregation. At the back of the chapel is another courtyard filled with stands of flowers and plants, and you then enter a large vestry or guest hall furnished in good Chinese style. At the back of this building is a substantial six-roomed house for good old deacon Tseng and his wife, who are remarkable among the Chinese for their cleanliness and good taste. Behind Tseng's house is a small square garden, on the other side of which is Mrs. Arnold Foster's Girls' School and teachers' rooms. This splendid property has been built in native style, as it is cheaper and better suited for the purpose. All must feel that out of that dark and sorrowful furlough of 1881 there now shines a great light, which adds many long-needed facilities for usefulness to the workers in the Hankow Mission.

This year will be ever memorable for the remarkable proclamation issued from the Tsung-li Yamên (Government office) at Peking. It will be seen that

the tone which pervades this proclamation is totally different from that of the edict of 1844, which at the time called forth such a feeling of thankfulness from all who were interested in the evangelisation of China. It not only states that a profession of Christianity is not in itself a crime, it bids the people in general to live on terms of friendship and good-will with their Christian neighbours, and exhorts all local magistrates to treat Christian applicants for justice with perfect impartiality. The proclamation here given was issued by the Governor of the Chekiang province:—

“In the 3rd moon of the present year (April, 1886), instructions to the following effect were received from the Tsung-li Yamên:—

“‘The protection of Christian converts being provided for in the Treaties, and friendly relations having now been re-established between China and France, it becomes our duty to draw attention to the Imperial Decree, issued in the 7th moon of the 10th year of Kuang Hsü (August, 1884), which laid down that, wherever there was a church or chapel, proclamations should be issued with a view to securing harmony between the people and the converts.’ At the time of the receipt of this dispatch, I gave the necessary directions; but passing, as they would, through many hands, there has, of course, been danger of delay or error in their execution, and a possibility of the proclamation not having been uniformly promulgated. In respectful furtherance, therefore, of the benevolent intentions of the State, I feel it incumbent on me to put the matter in plain terms. Know, therefore, all men of whatsoever sort or condition, that the sole object of establishing chapels is to exhort men to do right: those who embrace Christianity do not cease to be Chinese, and both sides should therefore continue to live in peace, and not let mutual jealousies be the cause of strife between them. If cases come before



FRONT OF THE NEW CHAPEL, HANKOW.



the courts, the local authority should investigate them impartially, having regard only to the merits of the case, and not to the religion of the litigants, and should give his decision quickly: thus neither party shall inflict injury on the other, each shall pursue in peace and quietude its various callings, and the desire of the State to include in its kindly benevolence the men from afar equally with its own people shall not, I trust, be frustrated. From the date of this proclamation, any lawless vagabonds who make trouble or stir up strife without a cause shall be punished with the utmost rigour of the law: no mercy will be shown, so beware!"

In one other respect, not alluded to in the above proclamation, a great difference is noticeable between the present manifesto of the Government and that of 1844. The proclamation posted up at Shanghai contains the following sentences:—"Bear in mind that when missionaries live in the midst of your villages, you and they are mutually in the relationship of host and guest. . . . It is your foremost duty to act towards them with courtesy and forbearance." How different the state of things here presupposed from that which existed when the former edict was published! *Then*, the missionary was restricted to the five open ports; *now*, even the country districts and villages of the empire are open to him. Eighty years are a long time in the history of an individual. They are a very short time in the history of a nation. Who can say, after comparing the proclamations of 1886 with the edict of 1805, that Christianity is making no way in China? The progress made is *enormous*. God has overruled all the political events of the past eighty years, to effect an almost complete change in the religious policy of the Emperor of China, which is visible to the whole world. An even greater change is silently taking place in the thoughts and feelings of the people of China in reference to religion, by means

of spiritual forces, of which the world takes little cognizance.

One of the most interesting events of the year 1887 was the opening of the new chapel at Han Yang. Some of the converts there are among the brightest and best Mr. John has seen, and have been indefatigable in their attendance and help at the Hankow chapel. Although residing six or seven miles distant, neither wind, rain, nor snow could keep them away from the Sunday services. These poor people bought the land, and their fellow Christians at Hankow and Wuchang raised a goodly sum towards the building. The opening day was one long to be remembered for the joy and pleasure experienced. All hearts were full, eloquent speeches were made, several converts were baptized, and a great impetus was given to the Churches in the three cities.

A noteworthy conversion was that of a Hu-nan man who came to the chapel one day. Mr. John, after preaching, catechised his audience. As this man answered every question correctly he was asked where he obtained his knowledge of the doctrine. He replied that he had been reading several books. Then he was earnestly exhorted to give his heart to God. He said he would, and became an earnest Christian. The fires of persecution, however, awaited him, and the members of his class wanted to cut him off on account of his religion, but his aged mother's intercessions prevailed. "Why," said she, "do you want to deprive me of my only son, and, as you know, he is one of the best of sons. The only fault you can find with him is that he is a Christian. Spare him for my sake." He has been graciously kept of God, and is growing in knowledge.

Among several aged members who died in 1887 was the venerable Shen-tsi-sing, Mr. John's faithful friend, assistant, and preacher for thirty years. He acted as Mr. John's pundit in the composition or

translation of all his books and tracts save one, and was with him at the founding of the Hankow Mission. As an account of this remarkable man has already been given, it is only needful to add that some years ago he had a stroke of paralysis, and had latterly become very feeble. At the beginning of 1887 he returned to Nanking, his native city. Mr. John sent a man with him to attend to all his wants. This man returned, and reported that Mr. Shen had passed away on the 7th of November.

Mr. John says of Mr. Shen, "I loved, respected, and trusted him as I have never done any other Chinaman. He was universally respected for his learning, ability, and character. He believed in Jesus with all his intellect and heart; and it was his delight for years to stand up in the chapels, streets, and temples, and preach Christ and Him crucified. I never saw him show the least fear or shame when preaching or speaking of Christ. May God raise up many more like Mr. Shen in connection with all the Churches in this land."

Another dear brother was Mr. Fung, who at one time was an opium smoker. He was led to give up the habit by a sermon preached by Mr. John on James iv. 8. Mr. John described the opium smoker lifting up his stained hands in prayer, and God bidding him go and cleanse them. Mr. Fung narrating this to his fellow Christians said, "When the pastor, representing the opium smoker, lifted up his hands and told us how God was looking at the opium stains on the fingers, I felt he was describing *me*, and when the pastor cried out, 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners,' I felt God was speaking to *me*. I resolved to give up the habit; and I want to tell you all, that I would rather die than touch that accursed thing again." Mr. Fung died in Christ, and was often heard during his last days repeating the words, "Leaving the world; going to the Father. Beautiful!"

Some of the most cheering news comes from the churches of the Hiau-kan district. Many of those sturdy villagers, who formerly attempted to take the lives of Mr. John and Dr. Mackenzie, are now equally lively in propagating their faith in Jesus. Additional converts have been added to the churches there. One candidate was taken dangerously ill a few months before his baptism. When all native remedies had failed to cure him, he was advised to give up his idea of entering the Christian Church and have the Buddhist idols brought in to worship. "No," said he. "If Christ was willing to lay down His life for me, it would be strange if I couldn't yield up my little bit of life to Him if He wishes to take it." He recovered from the sickness and was joyfully welcomed into the Church.

The Christians have not only had the loss of their own loved ones to mourn over, but with their heathen neighbours have shared in the severe troubles which have caused the Chinese to call 1887 the year of the seven great calamities; viz., great snow, great rains, great floods, great sickness, great fires, great drought, and the great calamity caused by the Yellow River bursting its banks.

Thus God is teaching the Chinese by His providence, His preached word, His witnessing people, and the ever-brightening light which these impart, that His Kingdom is set up in their midst.

The year 1888 has found the Hankow Mission receiving monthly accessions in very encouraging numbers. Mr. John works sturdily at his great task of translating the Old Testament into "easy Wen-li." It does not, however, prevent him from taking his full share in the general work. Still do the Chinese, when they see him enter the chapel, say to the native who may be preaching, "Stand down and let the foreigner speak to us; we understand him better than we do you." His heart is

bound up in the mission to these three great cities, with their two millions of inhabitants, while his eyes wander into the places beyond. Still does he sigh after Chung-Kiang, where he was the first to raise his voice and proclaim the Gospel, now twenty years ago. The missionary for that important place is still labouring at Hankow, until his brethren shall see that the time has come for him to proceed to his appointed work of founding a mission there.

Although more than half a million copies of various publications have been issued from the Central China Tract and Book Depôt, of which Mr. John is the President, he still iterates his old appeal of "Preach! preach!" and with good reason.

A few years ago wherever the missionaries went the country people cried out "Books! books!" Now when the missionary goes to them the cry is changed into "Preach! preach!" They have read the books, and now want them explained. Preaching also has still a strange fascination over the human heart. Mr. John says, "Give them a book, and they read it carefully, perhaps; but they do not seem to feel. I have never seen a Chinaman weep over a book, but I have many times made a Chinaman weep by the proclamation of the Gospel."

The missionaries are giving increasing attention to the training of young people. They have now six boys' and two girls' schools, where the great object is to give the children a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Not long ago a little blind boy, who was being examined for admission into the church, was asked by Mr. John—

"Do you know where Jesus is?"

"He is here," replied the lad.

"You are blind; how do you know that Jesus is here?" asked the pastor.

"Because I can see Him with my heart's eye."

Thus both old and young are being led by the loving and wise founder of the Hankow Mission into the path of righteousness.

While God continues to honour him with much success, his brethren in England have, in May, 1888, shown their appreciation of his faithful labours by electing him as Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales for the year 1889. It is to be hoped that the way will be made plain for him to accept this position, as his presence and advocacy of the mission cause will doubtless draw attention and bring much assistance to the work upon which his heart has so long been set.

The attitude of some Christian people toward their brethren who are just emerging from heathenism seems to be expressed in the words,

“Hereafter, in a better world than this,  
I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.”

If, however, Mr. John is able to respond to the call of the Churches in England, his occupancy of that important position will enable many who support the London Missionary Society to realise in a way they have never done before, the closeness of the ties which now bind the work of God at home with that carried on abroad by these “Messengers of the Churches.”

Thirty-three years have passed since, in response to the call of the Master, the Rev. Griffith John went forth to China. We cannot but admire and adore the wisdom and omniscience which prepared, and at the right moment sent forth, a worker so wonderfully adapted to this hard sphere of labour. The rock, although divinely smitten, was rock still, and the living stream drawn from its stony bosom required skilful hands to guide it through the desert. Twenty-five years ago he stood alone, and faced the problem at Hankow. Now a band of brave, hard-working missionaries are by his side, and with loving



sympathy uphold his hands while the conflict with evil is raging. So many points of vantage have already been secured, and such steady progress continues to be recorded, that no doubt remains as to the ultimate issue of the fight.

It would be unbecoming to attempt any estimate of Mr. John. Such can only be formulated by Him "who will render unto every man according to his work." Rather will we pray that he may long be spared to show the erring heathen the way to the living God, and then amid triumphant plaudits enter the presence of the King.

"God of the Universe, hear me ; Thou fountain of love everlasting,  
Hark to the voice of Thy servant ! I send up my prayer to Thy heaven.  
Let me hereafter not miss at Thy throne one spirit of all these  
Whom thou hast given me here ! I have loved them all like a father,  
May they bear witness for me that I taught them the way of salvation,  
Faithful, as far as I know of Thy word ; again may they know me,  
Fall on their teacher's breast ; and before Thy face may I place them—  
Pure as they now are, but only more tried—and exclaiming with  
gladness,  
Father ! lo, I am here, and the children whom Thou hast given me."

THE END.







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